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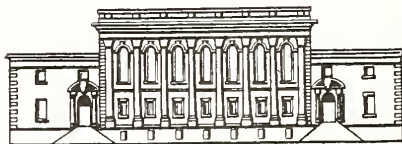
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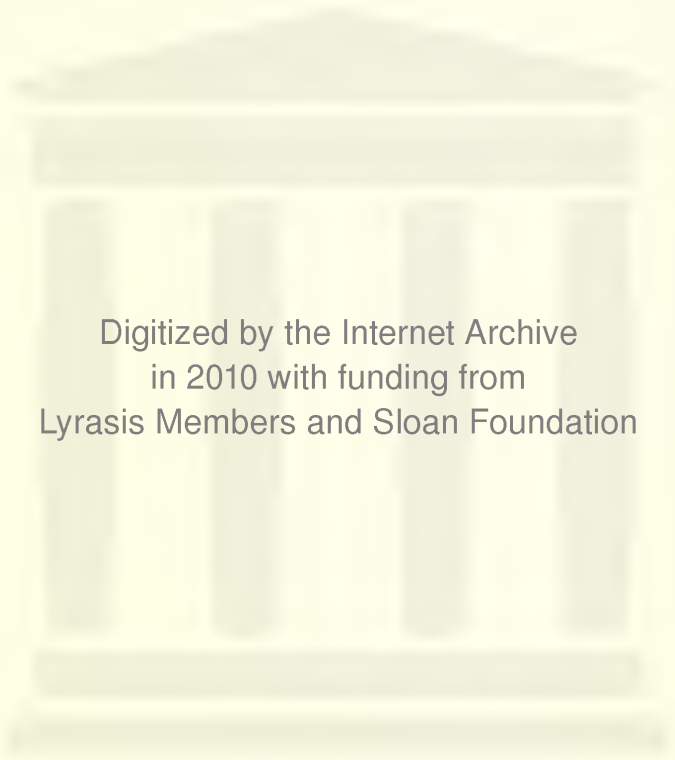
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THE BRAMBLER



SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR VIRGINIA
VOLUME 36, No. 1
NOVEMBER, 1958

THE
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SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER, 1958

The Brambler

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA



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The Brambler

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

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To Mr. Faulkner and Mr. Hemingway

HE LAY beneath the great still brown oak, doing nothing. A bee buzzed by his ear. He flicked it away not caring about the bee, but because it came naturally — a reflex action, which meant nothing and led nowhere. We knew this son of Harvard Jones and grandson of Henry Harvard Jones was there under the tree as he always was at this time of day, and that his father would never have allowed his son to behave in the slovenly lazy manner that he did. He would have told him how he was the son of a wealthy prominent man of Jefferson, how he should dress careful-like and stand up proud.

Harvard riding through the cotton fields inspecting the crops with a disdainful eye and a gallant seat upon his black stallion, the niggers looking up as he passed and dutifully bowing to the monarch of the white pillared mansion, they didn't love him, they worked in the fumigating sultry fields because they were slaves and would be beaten if they didn't succumb to his will. Harvard was a man of strength: of strength which no one dared question. We, in town, knew he had not gained this land by honest ways, but like a slimy, stealthy snake — one without scruples or morals. That was how Tom was made and born, without God caring one way or the other, just fulfilling the demands for a child, without putting in all the necessary makings for a man, just tossing it all together and not much caring about the outcome. Sisters were often blamed for the idiot result. We, in town, blamed that, but not Harvard. God had misjudged; God had been careless. He rode out of the fields, thrashing his stallion till he (the horse) foamed at the mouth and he (Harvard Jones) with cruel close-set eyes which glimmered on a dark night like phosphorous in the oaken skull, became triumphant in his onslaughting speed. He had died when the niggers and foaming horse revolted simultaneously. We were glad he was dead.

His sister, corrupted by him, lived alone in the rotting mansion with her son, Tom.

And he would be rising now, directing his splayed barefeet toward the mansion. It was time for him to eat supper of pork fat and beans which he wouldn't notice. He would be preoccupied with what we didn't know, but we knew he would be there in patched, faded overalls eating the tasteless food.

Tomorrow under the same tree doing the same nothingness, Tom would be there. We knew.

William Faulkner

The afternoon was groggy. Tom Jones rolled over and looked up at the oak tree above him.

"Life is a silly waste of time," he thought to himself. A bee buzzed around his ear. He lazily flicked it away. It returned. He flicked again.

A bird sang in the top of the tree. Tom studied the tree without much interest. The bird was hidden by the branches. He closed his eyes.

"That sun is hot," he thought. "Why in the hell did God have to make the sun so damned hot in Mississippi? There must be other states he could torture."

The bird sang again. "And that bird. Why does the stupid animal have to sing right over my head? Nothing to do and nothing to think about. A waste of time."

He started to roll over again, but the effort was too great so he stayed the way he was.

"It must be almost six o'clock. Almost time to get up and go eat." Then there were all those things he'd promised Ma he'd do this afternoon. "Why do chores on a day like this? Why do anything? A silly waste."

The steeple bell rang six times. "Some old geezer put those bells up to remind people of him after he died. Stupid guy. It rings so damned often that you don't hear it anymore or else you think of him and curse. Poor, stupid guy."

The bells stopped. With effort, Tom pulled himself up.

"Time to go eat. Ma will be good and mad at me for not doin' the chores. Aw, what the hell, a silly waste of time."

Ernest Hemingway

Thoughts on The Relationship Between Marriage and Shoes

SHE LIKED his looks, his laugh, his booze
But most of all she loved his shoes.
It wasn't the laces which caused her to love them
But the strange intellectual yellowness of them.

She dreamed of them running, romancing, and dancing
Stepping, and shuffling, and happily prancing.
She embraced the wearer in dreams quite aesthetic
And pondered and wondered if dreams were prophetic.

She guessed from his shoes that he loved works Platonic
That his hobbies were atoms and planes supersonic.
To her he read Shelley and Goethe and Shakespeare
And quoted at length from **Queen Mab** and **King Lear**.

But alas and alack, he reads nothing but **Mad**.
His mental capacity borders on sad.

"It's your shoes that deceived me," she angrily said.
But his Kisses removed thoughts of shoes from her head.

The moral to this story is short and quite sweet:
When regarding a man, never look at his feet.
Else all of your life you'll be singing the blues,
And polishing silver and tables and shoes.



H. CHAPMAN

DR. LAWRENCE G. NELSON

RAGGED VERSES

Read by L. G. N. at the Community Celebration
of the Launching of Joe's Float, August 19, 1958

Dedicated, without his permission, to Mr. Joseph A. Gilchrist, Jr.
Farmer, Seaman, Craftsman, Benefactor.

* * *

I.

OUR LAKE lay empty in the summer sun;
Something was lacking to complete the fun;
God said, Let Gilchrist be! — and the job was done.

Arms and the man I sing, whose Daedal craft
Put cunning boards together, fore and aft
And fixed in the dolorous deep of the central flood
This Ark-for-Ark's-sake, anchored in the mud.
Long separated planks and drums and screws
Were here assembled by order of the Muse.
(The Muse, be sure, exults in a job well done,
Whether it's done for money or for fun.)
Like wandering Delos, fixed to a final place,
While wings and waters make delusive chase,
This floating barque is a moral admonition
A Symbol of our cosmical condition.
It rides the waves of watery circumstance
Like us and our own Earth, floating in stellar dance,
Moving in ritual grooves of time and dream and chance.
(Thou too sail on, O Ship of State!)

II.

Say, Muse, who was the fountain of this high emprise?
For Inspiration works in various mortal guise.
I hear the hum and stir of woman's voice,
The source of all our woes and all our joys.
Her names are legion: truth is quickly stated:
Her power must not be underestimated.
But Man it was who brought the dream to life.
And it's the man, the maker, that now we honor,
And his own handiwork — go lie upon 'er!
For there she floats, a place for the sun to shine on,
For all of us to recline on, and to dine on,
And maybe (say it softly) to entwine on.
(Thou too sail on, O Ship of State!)

III.

There are our young barbarians, all at play,
And there will be for a long tomorrow's day.
License their roving limbs, and let them go
Before, behind, between, above, below.
Here let there be sweet whisperings in the night,
An Island-Bower for youth and youth's delight;
Let joy increase, let the floor remain upright.
And when we're gone into our ending days,
For everything, we know, beneath the moon decays,
We want this to remain, to tell posterity:
Josephus fecit me, 1-9-5-8 A. D.
And now arise, my friends, and sound this festive note:
Long life to Joe the Craftsman, and Joe's Float!
(Thou too sail on — but here's the End,
And none too soon: my poem is penned.)

DEAR FREYA,

Sit down for a moment, stop all those *Titus Andronicus* rehearsals, and hear about Angna Enters. Take heart, here's someone who actually earns money doing pantomimes and painting pictures. If she can do it, so can you. I'll never forget that "Socrates and the Hemlock" bit you did in our living room. You used no music, no costumes, and you took the part of about ten people urging Socrates not to drink, or telling him to get it over with — plus playing Socrates himself. That was as clever as any of Miss Enters' comic scenes. I laughed at her silent jokes, but have enjoyed yours much more. Now, I'm not saying this to flatter; get that out of your head. If you could see her — and yourself, while you're at it — you'd know what I mean.

I had dinner with her accompanist. "Aha" I thought, "Here's where I pick up some good information on how a struggling artist can get to be a well-known mime. I can find out how pantomime compares with other types of theater art. I'll send Freya the lowdown on competition, cost, preparation of new material, earnings — the works." Would you believe it? all he did was talk about Anna Russell, with whom he had worked before he started playing for Miss Enters. "Well, after all," he said, "There I am — stuck out in the wings, playing that music. I can't even see what she's doing." So back to Anna Russell's "Ring Cycle" and tips on how to "Write your own Gilbert and Sullivan Operette." He seemed discontented with his part in the act; but he may have been turning on that super modesty some artists have — myself excluded — for his music in the intervals between pantomimes was good music well played. He was a gentle, short young man with a noticeable New York accent. Although he wouldn't have admitted it, it must have bothered him to hear the audience talking during those intervals, when he played some of his best music. I recognized Poulenc's *Perpetual Motion*, some Bach (hurrah!) and a Mozart rondo. Pat me on the back, will you, old thing?

On the morning after the performance I was sitting at the breakfast table, spooning crumbs out of my orange juice, when I slowly became aware that there was a conversation going on across the table. "There I was, sitting in the front row with my date, and oh, I thought that Virgin dance, or whatever it was supposed to be, was in Terrible Taste." That made me angry. It made me wonder about my own taste. Explanation. "The Virgin dance" was Miss Enters' portrayal of an early Gothic representation of the Virgin Mary when she discovers that she is to bear Christ. Evidently my friend at breakfast had never seen those stone Virgins in the old cathedrals — those stiff, dignified queens with their pathetic, yet sweet, little-girl faces. Evidently she knew nothing about the simple, peasant faith of the



poor people who would look at the statues. Angna Enters' Virgin was dressed in the heavy, brilliant costume of a queen; but she danced and clapped her hands with childish delight when she began to see what a wonderful thing was happening to her. She did a few awkward steps in clumsy big shoes. It seemed right, not in bad taste. I'm sure my friend's date could not have been shocked at the Virgin's realization that giving birth would bring her pain. If he was, he'll get over it. Freya, old friend, I wish you could have seen that pavane she did. For a moment the Virgin had been a human young girl in pain; then she became a woman, a real Queen of Heaven. She took the preparation steps for a ritual dance to

show her devotion to God and her mature acceptance of her motherhood. Then the little pianist began his music again and played really well, for the audience was paying attention. He played William Byrd's "Galliard for the Earl of Salisbury," but I couldn't recognize it at first because he played it very slowly. He turned it into a pavane. Do you remember that old Russian countess, Sonja *Stephenson*, and how she used to say, when she taught us Renaissance dances, "Now, children, keep in your minds a statue from King Arthur's court. Be stiff, be exact, you cowboys, you!"? Miss Enters' pavane was stiff, exact, and Sonja Stevenson would have given her a gold star. It was so good that I didn't want to clap at the end, but everyone else did. So I, conformist that I am, joined in.

The only other thing she did that I liked as well as the Virgin's dance was her other Church piece, "Boy Cardinal." You've got to see that and try it yourself. Heh heh — I can see you as one of those sixteen year-old prelates who plays the castinets (when Authority's back is turned) as a charmer's lure to young ladies. Put on your Richard III sneer. That's it. You've got it.

Good hunting. I'll write tomorrow and tell you about that Lord Nelson Christmas play Mother sent me. I'll *keep you in suspense* till then.

Your Servant,

Padraic

ELIZABETH FEW

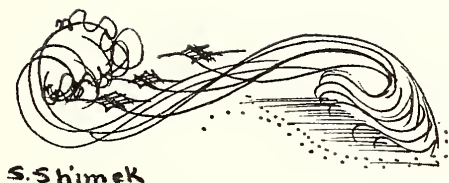
Autumn At College

IT COMES so steadily
that you do not realize it,
like the crab-grass
taking over the dell.

On the weekends,
at the parties,
the cry has switched
from gin to scotch.

The air is crisp,
the leaves are fated,
the feeling of change
spreads over the days.

Resort



TEN O'CLOCK and a shrimp boat light over the water
 is blended now into night except for a circle of brilliance,
 spotlight upon a stage
 and music, piano music under glass, served by a plump, Negro hand,
 red-polished, and heavy, sweet scents from the elbow creases.
 Hair, sticky with evening's salt and with a smell,
 the body smell coming with summer and seeping out
 from under cotton print to be blended with cheap perfume
 and a clean-shaven odor of men.
 Earlier in the evening, a pearl was born in fire,
 nursed into maturity; milk-clouds passing in ceremony
 were grey-clad monks in procession,
 an exodus across the sky.
 Now the jewel suspends, mobilely, from wires that are not.
 A statue is the night, with the sudden cotton step of a cat
 with three white feet —
 fourteen glitters mark a pier; no one will find seclusion upon that pier,
 no one will.
 How like marble is the precision of this peace? Almost a rhyme without
 punctuation.
 Down the blemished beach the high-school boys drink their beer
 and make fumbling love to sun-burnt girls with straight salt hair
 and no way out — they do not care or know.

II

There is music — (soon she'll take a break
and sip the bourbon and water
and slowly not care
who watches her hands, red-tipped,)

and still a cloud-herd, blissful, burning air
forgive them for they know not where they're going —
a car down the beaten beach, full of adolescence and puberty.

Small orange flowers, awake tonight, they haven't fallen
with petaled heads into the sand
but only lean slightly in their beds,
the bottled redhead and her husband lean slightly in their beds.

First star wish and later a falling one — both count, you see,
I wish, you wish, he, she, it, wishes.

The greasy Coppertone admits the sun's tanning rays while
blocking out the harmful burning rays.

On nights like this, my skin is cool and smooth and burning underneath
and waiting unless it sleeps.

Apollo got up this morning, drank his coffee, munched Mrs. Baird's toast,
punched his boss's time clock and worked straight through 'til five
(stopping for lunch at Hector's).

And all those who benefitted were sore tomorrow, harmful rays blocked out
and all.

I seem to have forgotten my purpose.

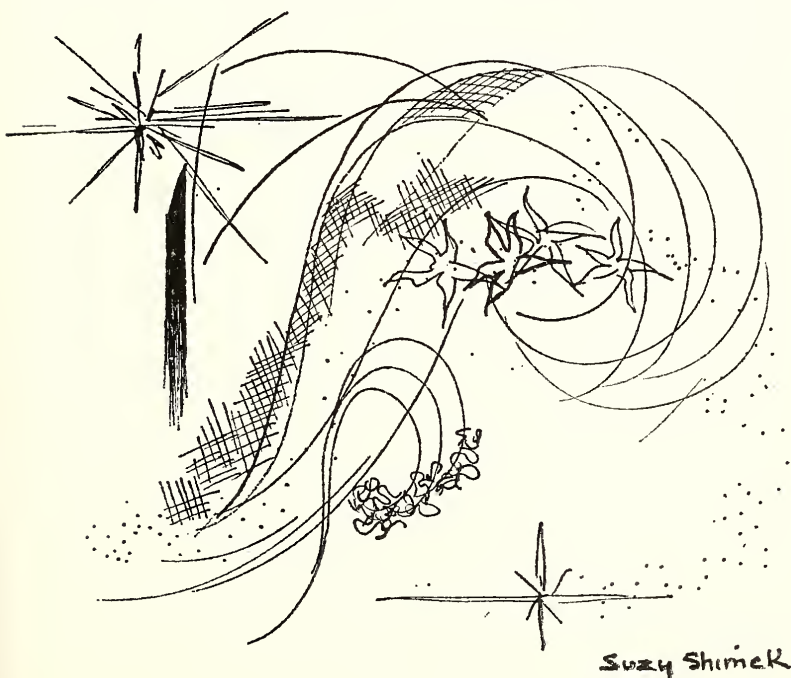
The moon, suspended, stares at me and knows the anguish of permanence.
I am a pencil under glass but do not reek of Chanel
or dig my crimsoned fingers into ivory.

Across the terrace the wet beach towels are spread to dry,
for tomorrow's day of rest.

Mechanisms on a stream-lined beach, just outside our room,
a sandy, weed-filled path curves snakelike to the sea —
so steaming in late afternoon and at evening when the
world goes inside to dress for dinner,
that I can run down the dunes, my feet in blue tennis shoes
sinking deliciously into the heaviness of white,
and come exhausted onto the beach, spread like cream;
I can walk for miles with driftwood and a pureness saturating
the day's breath, now exhaled to cool the subconsciousness, the sea.

A three-fourths darkness, goose-pimpled from the sunburn
and air-conditioning, drowsy from conversation.
'... the second hubby will turn out better than ...', words twisted
across a table, dirty ice-cream dishes remain, facing one another
in their glassy moods.
Someone speaks, and then the other, telling each the same,
(bourbon and water bubbles from their lips and no one listens.)
Off in a corner the small blond and reddish and sometimes green-eyed
and often freckled couple, talk in quiet tones that brush against
each other as if they could not quite reach out and touch each other ...
these two are merely objects, their fates decided for them.
They never raise their impotency to a boiling point.

So lush I feel and cannot, (that is a terrifying word),
be long for materialism, (is that what it's called?),
and, oh, yes, industrialism and commercialism and all the other isms
that sink their dentures into inhuman flesh!
So there's a devil in it after all.



IN A MINUTE THERE IS TIME

The title is taken from T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. The whole quotation is as follows:

In a minute there is time

For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

EVEN though Diana Montgomery was relaxed and sleepy, she looked as though she were prepared for a cocktail party. She was sitting in the living room of the apartment smoking a cigarette and distastefully studying her ink-stained fingers. Her room-mate was slumped in a chair opposite her, staring emptily into space with an expression of emotional exhaustion.

"Jackie," Diana groaned, "I never knew exams could be so hard, even at Vassar. I'm sure I flunked them all," she added lightly because she knew she hadn't.

"Catharsis, complete catharsis," her room-mate mumbled.

"Really, Jackie, I just don't know how I'll have the energy to have a good time. Maybe I'll become a vacation recluse and lock myself up with a copy of Sartre."

"Honestly, you've been lugging that book around for almost a month now and I know you haven't even read the flyleaf."

"You know me too well," Diana laughed uncomfortably, "but I have to create an impression for the masses, you know."

"I just hope you never realize that you are one of the masses," Jackie retorted.

Diana laughed with assurance and put her cigarette out in an overflowing ash tray. Except for the ash trays, the room was coldly immaculate. The apartment was small but big enough for winter living. The furniture was good and was arranged so you knew it. The rooms felt as if they had never recovered from their annual summer desertion. Diana fitted the apartment perfectly; she was small and her hair was mouse-colored and messy. Her clothes were neat; you could tell that they came from the best stores. Even when they were rumpled they looked synthetically casual. None of her friends would have been surprised to see a Bergdorff label stamped indelibly on her forehead.

Diana's parents were staying in Hobe Sound. Her mother, as usual, had been confused about the exact date of Diana's mid-semester vacation and would not be back until the day Diana was to leave for Vassar. Diana was disappointed to find out that she would not see her parents but the advantages of the empty apartment were obvious. Even if her parents had been in New York, she and her room-mate would have stayed at the Montgomery's house in Long Island.

Diana got up with an obvious effort, "I guess we had better get dressed if we ever want to be ready when everybody starts coming. I just can't wait till I see Walter, it has been ages since I saw him last."

"He's not still at Yale, is he?" Jackie asked.

"Poor Walter," Diana answered, "the dear boy is about to get kicked out. He said he was at Yale twice last semester; once to register and once to go to a football game. Oh well, it's Yale's loss, not Walter's. He really has such an amazing mind, it's a shame the faculty doesn't appreciate him."

The two girls went into Diana's room and began to change for the party. Her room was different from the rest of the apartment. She never could decide what color she wanted it painted so she experimented. Right now each wall was a different color. There were pictures of her coming-out party above her dressing table and an original Picasso over her bed. The floor was strewn with clothes and shoes.

"This is one room the maid won't dare clean up. She's probably afraid of finding a body underneath the debris."

"I wouldn't be surprised if one did turn up," Jackie said.

Jackie was straightening her hem and Diana was squeezing herself into a dress when the door bell rang.

"I'll get it, Diana."

"Oh, Jackie, do go put the ice bucket and glasses in the living room, will you? I'll answer the door."

"But you're not dressed yet," Jackie said.

"Run get the ice, I'll be ready in a minute."

Jackie shrugged and went to the kitchen. Diana quickly rummaged through the mess on the floor and found her shoes and belt. She put them on and ran toward the front door.

"Rick, Ginnie! My God it's just been ages."

"Good to have you back on the party circuit, Di."

More people arrived until there were about ten couples lounging around the living room. Jackie heard snatches of conversation as she passed through the room to the bar.

"Did you hear about Walter? He passed himself off as a defrocked priest at this deb party in Long Island. He said he had been excommunicated for stealing the altar wine. You should have seen those debs' faces, what a panic!"

"Eliot's *Waste Land* is nothing but the trash can of English literature. He just collected scraps of other poems, perverted them, combined them, gave the conglomeration a title, and signed his name."

Diana was going from group to group, passing judgments and giving opinions. Her views were usually so incredible that everyone let them pass, and laughed. They thought that she gave excellent parties and had good liquor so had a right to her opinions.

"Diana darling, Walter just came in." somebody said.

Walter McCobb drifted into the crowd. He was tall and slender and slightly round-shouldered. His face was pale and a bit bloated; he had a sly, dizzy expression like a twelve year old child who has been drinking. He was dressed in grey slacks, blue jacket, and silk ascot. He carried himself with assurance as if he were the epitome of the well-dressed New Yorker.

"Dear Walter, it's so good to see you again." Diana said. "You just can't imagine how dead it has been at school with no one around. It would be different if the work was hard enough to be a challenge, but as it is it's not even interesting."

"The parties haven't been any fun without you Di, but I really don't see why you isolate yourself at that college. It doesn't have very much to offer academically and it's no fun. Vassar is just like Yale, nothing but a name. You should quit and we could get married or something and have a good time."

"Sure Walter," Diana said, "when I do that you know I'll be hard up."

"That day may not be too far off, anyhow you know I'll always be around in case you get desperate. Anything for a laugh, you know." he said and strolled off to a different crowd.

The next morning Jackie woke Diana up and told her to get out of bed or the eggs would be cold.

"Oh God, Jackie darling, I simply cannot move, I'm too, too hung. I swear I'm wearing a sweater on every tooth. It was a good party though, wasn't it?"

"I think everybody enjoyed themselves. Here's your mail Di, I'm going to eat breakfast." Jackie said as she left the room.

"Jackie you are just too healthy. Please don't eat it in here, I just couldn't face an egg."

Diana rustled through her mail sorting out bills and circulars until she had a neat pile of letters, one from her mother, one from Vassar, and two postcards.

"Jackie," she yelled, "here's a postcard from Rex — usual 'wish you were here' mess. Another one from Pete — says he's made a fortune running turtle races in Nassau. Letter from the parents — 'hope you are having a good time, etc.' Poor Mummy, I think she really likes to worry about me. Letter from the Poughkeepsie Penitentiary. What do you know, Office of the Dean."

"What do they have to say?" Jackie asked after a pause.

"Jackie, come here and read this thing. There must be some mistake, they sent it to the wrong person or something."

Jackie took the letter and read aloud:

Dear Miss Montgomery,

We regret to inform you that because of your exceedingly low average, the College cannot allow you to return this coming semester. The College wishes to notify you that your grades were so low that it would be impossible for you to achieve a sufficient average by the end of the year. In view of this fact, we would suggest that you apply for admission to a college more suited to your abilities . . .

"In other words, I flunked out. But Jackie, how could I? I worked, you know I did. Sure I said the work was easy and everything but everybody always says that. I tried, I really tried. Oh Jackie, it just has to be a mistake. What will my friends think?"

"I'll tell you exactly what they'll think. They'll rationalize it just as you probably will. 'Poor darling Di, she flunked out of Vassar but everyone knows it happened because she wasn't appreciated. What a waste! Of course she didn't work, it would have been different if she did.' Face life for a minute Diana, you are not as bright as you think you are. Admit it for once and go to some college where you can do the work."

"Stop it Jackie! I'm not stupid. Besides, I bet if I really did try, I mean really try, I could have stayed in." Diana laughed, "Maybe I could have made Dean's Team."

"Aren't you glad there are people like me around to supply you with excuses? Too bad you are not intelligent enough to think up your own. Well, it's been an interesting friendship while it lasted. I'll see you around, Di. Give my love to your parents for me and tell your mother not to worry, it's not worth it," Jackie said as she walked out of the room.

Diana lay in bed for a little while then got up and went over to the telephone and dialed a number.

"Hello Walter? This is Di. I've quit Vassar. Do you remember what you said to me last night?"

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THE BRAMBLER



SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR VIRGINIA

VOLUME 36, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1959

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SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

FEBRUARY, 1959

The Brambler

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA



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The Brambler

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

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NANCY BEEKMAN

THE GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK

"THE tragedy is not that things are broken; the tragedy is that they are not mended," Ellen thought to herself as she laboriously pulled a weed from the garden and flung it into her basket. She rested a moment, watching the hammock which hung in the shadow of the great oak in back of the decrepit white farmhouse. It reminded her of the pendulum on the grandfather's clock that stood in the hall. The clock, like the hammock, seemed to have the same ominous rhythm of the tragic refrain: they are not mended, they are not mended. The incessant repetition was too much for her. She glanced distastefully at the flower bed, put down her trowel, and stood up, brushing the dirt from her knees.

"What time is it?" She asked her brother who was resting in the now motionless hammock. Dave looked at her over the edge of the green and yellow plaid retreat and grunted, "Two o'clock. You'd better go and dress. It'll be time to leave soon."

Ellen said nothing. As she walked quietly toward the empty house that for eighteen years had been her home, she wondered how David could be so practical when she felt so torn apart. She concluded that it was part of his nature and that men were better able to cope with this kind of situation that splintered life, made the present awkward, and the future insecure. And it was only one of many such unpleasant situations; divorce certainly was not new, although her parents' break-up only today became part of her family history.

She heard her mother call to her from the kitchen. Ignoring the summons, she went past the grandfather's clock that stood in the hall beating the constant tick-tock message, "they are not mended," and climbed the stairs to her room.

As she dressed for the trip back to the city, she thought how lonely she would be for the pleasant fields and familiar paths in the quiet forest that she would never walk again; lonely for the old, unwanted farmhouse when the family had scattered to follow their separate paths. This monument would stand there with its cold fireplaces, cob-webbed corners, and rotting steps, until it crumbled under the hard hand of Nature, a final witness to the disintegration of her family.

Yes, the family was disintegrating, she thought as she methodically brushed her hair. Her father was in South America. David left for Fort Dix to begin his army training the next day. Her mother was leaving for Europe right after Ellen's wedding. Wedding? Ellen felt her heartbeat quicken. She would soon be married, and this could all be forgotten. No, that wasn't true. Forget that her father had deserted her mother? Forget that her family was shattered into such individual pieces that they would never act as a unit again? She would not forget.

She brushed her long hair harder, trying to ignore the rhythmic motion of the brush reminding her "they are not mended, they are not mended." She paused, brush in mid-air. Of course they're mended. There is no tragedy here. The family

unit was no doubt broken; but wasn't everyone satisfied now? Each individual had to step in a new direction, but each member of the family earnestly wanted the new direction. Divorce wasn't only a break-up; it was also a new beginning. Her mother had had a miserable life, now she was free. Her brother had been confused and indifferent, now there was a direction and a purpose in his life. She knew her father had been unhappy and alone, that he had suffered as much as any one of them; and she hoped he found peace.

Confidently Ellen checked her appearance in the mirror, smoothed her hair into place, and left the room. "I'm ready," she called to her mother as she came down the stairs and contemptuously ignored the old grandfather's clock. Divorce itself is a mending, she realized. It ends security, but it brings self-reliance and rebirth.



A GIFT FOR EMILY

"I'M DREAMING of a white Christmas," blared the loudspeaker to the last minute shoppers on Main Street.

"To hell with it," muttered J. Doddington Dodd, III, as he kicked a black kitten out of the way, who had the nerve to sit right in front of the door of Madame Bonton's Shop.

Present for Emily, pick up tux at the cleaners, be at the Driving Club at seven for Peyton's dinner party, read the list in his coat pocket. Inside the shop he was surrounded by digging elbows, floating tinsel, filmy lingerie, seductive labels with equally fantastic price tags, and the mixed fragrances of imported perfumes, and he hated it. He paced from counter to counter, hurriedly looked at the displays, and then, defeated each time, he turned away.

A Christmas present had never before bothered J. Doddington Dodd, but now he, Reesville's most eligible young bachelor, a man of taste and experience, could not find one suitable gift. That was all he was looking for — just one gift, and he glared at the people who juggled great piles of brightly wrapped bundles.

The gift was not a problem because J. Doddington Dodd worked for Emily's father, or because Emily was the season's loveliest debutante. It was a problem because J. Doddington Dodd was in love with Emily, a thing which had never happened to him in ten seasons as the most-sought-after escort on the Cotillion list.

Discreetly he had inquired of Emily's mother to find just what sort of thing Emily might need. In reply to his question, this lady shook her delicately blue-tinted waves and told him, quite regretfully, that she was sorry but she really did not think that Emily needed anything.

Now as J. Doddington Dodd elbowed his way from counter to counter, he was desperate, for he had been to every shop in town and not one had a gift for Emily. Madame's failed him too, and he rushed out the door with only ten minutes to pick up his tuxedo at the cleaner's before they closed.

"Christmas," mumbled J. Doddington Dodd, tripping over the black kitten, who still had not learned its lesson.

"Meow," said the kitten indignantly.

"Shut up," said J. Doddington Dodd, regarding his accuser fiercely.

"Meow," said the cat, undaunted.

Then J. Doddington Dodd looked at the small black kitten with white feet and vest and began to laugh. And he laughed and laughed and laughed.

"Tuxedo," he gurgled, "The damn cat's got on a tux." And he laughed some more.

"Purr," said the kitten.

"Tuxedo," said J. Doddington Dodd with great seriousness to the small cat. "I wonder if Emily would like you."

"Just like the ones we used to know," said the loudspeaker.

Everything Pink and Yellow

THE car jolted, Sarah was thrown forward bumping her forehead on the dashboard, but she didn't cry because she was too excited thinking about the circus, that's where she was going with her mother and father. It was the end of March, and the wind was still blowing hard and cold, chasing bits of last year's leaves across the front lawn. Inside the car, with the windows shut, Sarah felt warm seated between her mother and father. As the car rolled along, she thought about the circus, wondering if she could bring home a baby chameleon, like the one Jimmy, her next door neighbor, brought home from the circus last year. She asked her mother who said, "We'll see." Mother always said "we'll see." Well she decided, if she did bring home a baby chameleon, she wouldn't let Jimmy's dog eat it the way he had eaten Mickey, Jimmy's chameleon.

Then she remembered what she had done. She hadn't meant to spill nail polish all over her mother's fur coat, but everyone was taking such a long time to get ready, and she didn't have anything to do. She couldn't understand why her mother wasn't angry when she saw the coat. She had been very angry when Sarah and Mary had gotten lipstick all over her long white gloves when they were playing "dress-up," and when Sarah left her high heels in the sand box over night. But this morning mother only kissed her, and told her to run and get in the car.

Sarah looked at her father. She wondered why he had on his working hat, the soft, gray one. He never wore it on Saturday, even when they went into the city to pick up her grandmother. Well, she decided that people wore working hats to the circus. After all, she was dressed up, but Sarah liked to get dressed up. She didn't think that her father liked to wear his working hat. She thought about the circus again. She had a book about the circus that her mother read to her, and there were lions and seals and tightrope walkers. She liked the tightrope walkers best.

She wished that she could see out of the window of the car. From where she was sitting only the tops of trees and telephone poles were visible to her. Sometimes, on long trips, she would count the telephone poles as they went by, from one to ten, and then from one to ten again, but she was even too excited to do that today. She asked her mother if she could sit on her lap so that she could watch the other cars. Her mother said that she could, but she seemed to forget that Sarah was sitting on her lap as they drove along, she seemed busy thinking of something. Sarah loved the feeling of her mother's fur coat against her face, and she thought that the smell of the nail polish was delicious, but she didn't mention it. The fur coat always reminded her of Sunday School. Her Sunday School teacher had lots of fur things that she wore around her neck, and she always let Sarah sit next to her and pat the fur and touch the glassy little eyes.

She could see out the window now, but she really wasn't looking at the hundreds of cars on their way to the city. She was thinking of tightrope walkers and ladies in puffy skirts, everything pink and yellow, like in the book.

The car was rolling down a dirty street now, a street lined with big buildings. Sarah stopped thinking about the circus for a moment, and looked at the big, shabby houses. She watched the people who sat around the dusty entrances in front of the houses, and she was glad that her house was clean and that there was grass outside, and trees and a brook with frogs in it. When she looked at the people and then at her mother and father she felt comfortable and protected. These two people sitting with her were her kingdom, and she was their queen; although she didn't know it, she could feel it. She could see the smutty street outside, but she could brush it away like cookie crumbs on her skirt.

"Look!," Sarah cried. Her mother shivered from the sudden cry which interrupted her thoughts, and Sarah pointed to a sign on a building that read, "Barnum and Bailey Bros. March 25 to April 20 — Madison Square Garden." Sarah couldn't read the words, but she saw the pictures of the clowns and seals, all pink and yellow, like in the book. Mother only pointed to the other side of the street and said, "Look Sarah, see the little colored girl in the blue dress, pushing a doll carriage?"

It seemed to Sarah that they had been driving for days now. She wanted to say "when are we going to get there?," but she thought that her father might get angry. He always got angry on long trips when she asked that question. The sun was pouring through the windshield of the car and Sarah felt warm and lazy. She put her head on her mother's shoulder and rested her forehead against her mother's neck, it was so smooth and soft, and she smelt good. She was glad that her mother smelt good. She had an aunt who always smelt musty, like a smoky room, and Sarah hated to kiss her. She closed her eyes and listened to the voices of her mother and father, but she didn't pay attention to what they were saying, she hardly ever did, unless it was about her. Everything reminded her of taking a nap on a warm summer afternoon, except for the smooth motion of the car, a summer afternoon when voices and activity lulled her to sleep, a secure hum of familiar noises.

She woke suddenly because the car came to a stop. She rubbed her eyes and looked out of the window. The car had stopped in front of a big, brick building. Her mother was opening the door and telling her father that she would meet him inside after he parked the car. Sarah got out of the car with her mother and they walked up the big stone steps to the building. She was still a little dazed by the brightness after her nap, and it took her a few moments to remember where she was. At the top of the steps there was a door that went round and round, like the merry-go-round at the Zoo. Sarah wanted to go round in it several times, but her mother told her, almost impatiently, that they must hurry, and gently dragged her by the hand from the door, but Sarah, walking almost backwards, kept staring at the merry-go-round door. Behind the door there was a big room, empty except for people and a lady at a desk. The room seemed empty, even though there were people in it, because the ceiling was so high. They seemed to be staring at Sarah, and she didn't like them. She held tight on to her mother's hand.

They went up to the desk and her mother told the lady her name and the lady gave her mother a card. She wrote something on the card and gave it to the lady. Then the lady told her mother a number. Her mother said, "This way Sarah," and they walked toward a door in the wall. Her mother pushed a button and after a few seconds the door opened to an elevator. Sarah knew that it was an elevator, because there were elevators in her father's office building, when she went to visit

Santa Claus. She wondered if Santa Claus would be in this building too. She stepped quickly into the elevator, and her mother stepped in after her. Sarah hurried because she liked elevators, and she didn't want it to leave without her. She wondered why they didn't have elevators at home. Her mother said a number to the elevator man, and up they went. The elevator stopped, and a wonderful tickling feeling went up Sarah's back. She thought it such a pleasant feeling that she wanted to do it again, but her mother was already out of the elevator, so she had to scramble after her.

They walked down a long hall where everything smelt funny like the medicine closet at home. Her mother talked a great deal about all the nice people that Sarah was going to meet, but Sarah wasn't listening. She was trying to see into all the rooms along the hall. She could hear people in the rooms, but she couldn't see them because there were white screens in front of the doors. They came to a room without a screen, and her mother said, "now Sarah, this is going to be your own little room for a few days." There was a lady dressed in white in the room to meet them. She told Sarah her name, but Sarah wasn't listening. She was looking out the window, excitedly watching all the little cars and bug-like people miles below.

The room was white and too clean. There was a big high bed, and a high table, and an ugly yellowish-pink chair in the corner. The white lady handed Sarah's mother something that looked like a nightgown made out of diapers. Her mother helped Sarah off with her coat, and then told her that she was going to be able to wear the nice soft nightgown. Sarah started to get undressed, and she wished that the white lady would leave. She decided that she didn't like this lady, with hair like wool neatly laid on her head, and her white dress much too shiny. After Sarah was dressed, in what she thought was a silly baby's nightgown, the lady started to lift her up on to the high bed. Sarah squealed, she felt her eyes get wet. The lady took her hands away, and Mother's warm hands lifted her on to the high, hard bed, the pillow was lumpy, and she was afraid to look down. Then some men in white came in and one of them pricked her finger with a needle. Her mother said that it wouldn't hurt, and it didn't. One of the men said "routine tonsillectomy?" and the white lady smiled. Sarah wondered what a tonsillectomy was, but she didn't want the lady to know that she didn't know.

Her mother said that she would be right back, but that she had to go and meet Sarah's father. Sarah started to get frightened again, but she didn't dare ask her mother not to leave. After her mother left the white lady came in with a thermometer in her hand. She was smiling, like a cat. She said, "I bet you don't know what this is." Sarah got hot and cold all over, and she could feel something thumping inside her head. She hated the lady as much as she was able to hate, because she did know what a thermometer was, but she couldn't say anything. She looked over at the ugly chair, her mother's fur coat was lying on it and in the middle of the coat Sarah saw a big red stain. She turned her head to the empty, white wall, and suddenly she remembered the circus, where everything was all pink and yellow.

The Fourteen-Year Itch

THERE were many more pleasant things to do of an evening than sit on a hard doorstep and suffer from love and mosquitoes, but there he sat. His name was Thomas Wilkins Brown. He was fourteen years old and he was in love with Kimberly Farrell. "Kim" was what everyone called her, but it reminded him of the elephant boy in Rudyard Kipling's book, and she was anything but the elephant-boy type. He loved to say her name . . . Kim-Ber-Ly. It was like the big exhale at the end of a breathing exercise.

"Damn these mosquitoes," he said. They kept sneaking up behind him. By now he must have killed forty of them, and at least fifty had left an itch. A mosquito was like a girl, he thought . . . you'd almost *get* one, and she'd buzz right back to bite you. All you had to remember her by was the terrible itch from the bite. Girls really were hard to take at times.

Kimberly, for instance, was hard to understand. After suffering through all those awful dancing school sessions, you'd think she'd give him some credit. But no — she was all snowed over Reggie Balenski, the captain of the football team. Maybe Mother was right, though. The other night at dinner she had said, "Don't worry about Kimberly, Tommy — That Belenski boy is nothing but a Polack. She'll get over him."

He scratched his leg hard. So what if he were a Polack, Reggie wouldn't pull a boner like the one the other night at dancing class. It made him wince to think about it . . .

He was lucky to get her for a partner. His legs felt shaky, and he had to concentrate on the dancing teacher's instructions while thinking of funny things to say to Kimberly. His hands were sweaty and he kept wiping his palms on the back of his jacket when she wasn't looking. The teacher counted "one-and-two-and-," the music started, and he said loudly:

"I hate this stupid class. Why can't our parents teach us how to dance, for pete's sake? We aren't idiots. *Anybody* can do the box step."

"You have to learn properly, silly," Kimberly said, smiling. "Besides, our parents dance in the old style."

While she was talking he watched her mouth move, and he thought he saw some shiny wires on her teeth. "Kimberly, are you wearing braces?"

"Yes," she hissed through clenched teeth, "I got them today. The dentist said my jaw is mature now, and I have to have my teeth straightened before it gets too late."

"Gee," Thomas breathed, "Would you show me?" She accommodated him, opening her mouth beautifully. They paused in the middle of the dance floor.

"*Mister Brown and Miss Farrell*, would you like to give me your attention?" The dancing teacher was staring at them, and the whole class laughed. Kimberly turned red and looked at the floor.

"Change partners, please!" Thomas found himself with Carlotta, the biggest girl in the eighth grade. He kept glancing over at Kimberly but she wouldn't look at him. "I've humiliated her," he thought miserably. The class was dismissed and Reggie was waiting to walk Kimberly home. Football practice had ended early.

The mosquitoes were putting in their first string biters now. Thomas Wilkins began to swat furiously his arm, leg, chest, and face. He hated to admit it, but Reggie was a good guy. If you went up to ol' Reg and said "Good game, boy!" he'd grin and say, "Just teamwork, — but thanks, Tom!" You couldn't help but like Reg . . . all the guys did. He was big and dark and didn't brag. He had never joined a gang though he could've gotten into any of them.

Kimberly looked kind of vacant these days . . . Her eyes looked too shiny, Tom thought. "She really *is* snowed," he said to no one.

He looked up. A few stars crowded through the dark blanket of sky. About twenty-five mosquitoes bit him at once.

"I'll love you forever, Kimberly," he whispered sadly. He guessed Mother would say that sounded "adolescent" or "puppy-lovish." Ha! She'd see . . . as soon as Kimberly got the braces off her teeth he'd marry her.

He got up and ran to the porch steps. He had to get inside. It might be that he could think and scratch more effectively while on the safe side of a screen door.



A SUMMER EVENING

THERE were many more pleasant things to do of an evening than sit on a hard doorstep and suffer from love and mosquitoes, but there he sat. A door slammed behind him, and two little girls ran down the porch stairs, trailing their jump ropes after them. A woman leaned out of a front window and shouted to the hopping children, already half way up the street, "You be home at nine o'clock, do you hear? Nine o'clock and not a minute later!" They were too far away to hear her, she knew. She sighed and disappeared from the window, then leaned out again and addressed the boy on the doorstep.

"That you, Calvin?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Mercy, child, you've been sitting there like a statue for more than an hour. Where is Kathleen? Isn't she with you?"

"No, ma'am."

"Well, where is she then? I thought she was with you."

"No, ma'am. I mean she was, but then Sydney Freem came along while I was getting Jimmy's kite out of a tree, and I guess she went to Parson's Drug Store with him," he answered miserably. He did not look at her when he spoke, for he was inspecting a fly which had landed on his knee, deciding the best way to kill it. It was a tricky problem. 'Those old flies are pretty smart,' he thought, as he cupped his hands a few inches from the place where he would launch his attack. Suddenly he did not care if the fly got away or not, so he just flicked it off his knee.

"You waitin' for Kathleen?" he had been so intent on the fly's destruction, he had forgotten her mother at the window.

"No, ma'am. I mean, I guess I am. I don't know."

"You want to come inside?" she asked.

"No thanks. I like it out here." He wished she would go away and leave him alone.

"What's the matter, child? Cat got your tongue?"

She always called him 'child,' and it irritated him. Even his own mother spoke of him as 'dear child' when he dried the dishes or cleaned his room, and she *knew* he was fifteen now. 'Women sure are funny,' he thought, 'always gabbing and running off to tea parties and things. They aren't content with just being quiet and looking at a summer sunset or a kite floating through the air. They always have to go places or talk all the time.'

"If you see Kathleen, tell her she has to wrap her present for Linda's birthday party tomorrow."

"Yes, ma'am." The boy stood up to leave.

"You goin' to the drugstore now, Calvin?"

"I don't know, Maybe I will."

"If you see Kathleen, tell her what I said about the present. Good bye, Calvin."

"Bye." He walked slowly away, then speeded up when he heard Kathleen's mother call to him again from the window.

"Tell your mother I'll be by for her about two tomorrow. We're going to a church circle meeting."

"Yes, ma'am," he mumbled.

It was peaceful on the street. The trees' long shadows fell across the sidewalk, broken only by occasional patches of light from the setting sun. He walked along, wishing it were dark. There was a dull ache in his throat.

He could imagine Kathleen sitting in a booth at the drug store, demurely sipping a coke, and turning the glass around and around in her hand, as she listened to Sydney's account of the Boy Scout camping trip last weekend. He had been at the camp, too, and brought her a real Indian arrowhead, but she had gone off before he had a chance to give it to her. After she finished her coke, she would play "he loves me, he loves me not" with the straw. "That conceited old Sydney would think she meant him. He would be right, too," the boy thought. The ache in his throat became a lump, and tears moistened his eyes.

Then he saw his dog, Bobby, jauntily coming around the corner. He ran to meet him, and the two collided in their gladness to see each other.

"Hey, Bobby, good boy, where ya been? Want to play ball?" He rubbed Bobby's furry neck, then took a rubber ball from his pocket and threw it. The dog ran after it; the boy followed, laughing. "Good boy, Bobby. Hey, come on, boy, I'll race you home."

SUZI REITZ

Native Custom

THERE is something about sitting on a straw mat on the floor that leads to carefree abandon. All four of them looked quite abandoned sitting there behind the low table with the prosaic salt and pepper shakers and the plastic hurricane lamp. The two girls moved their legs closer underneath them in an effort to keep their black sheath dresses over their knees. The blonde wore several large charm bracelets and a silver mink stole. The girl with the brown hair, slightly younger, took off her beaded sweater a little defiantly. One noticed her long, perfect fingernails; she seemed to be turning the pages of an invisible book as she spoke.

The man with the Italian silk suit, and the thin features, seemed to be adapted to the night. In the daylight he would be pale and blinking, but his deep, dark

eyes, his slouch, the white hand that held the cigarette while the other hand wandered over the brunette's bare back all marked him as a young-man-who-inhabits-night-clubs, whether he sits on the floor or stands at a bar. The other man was rather beachy looking except for a startling Roman striped bow tie which marked him as an odd ball and a pseudo-British accent which redeemed him. "Oh, Josette, my little Josette. You are so insane," he kept saying to the blonde, whose only mark of insanity appeared to be a twitching eyebrow. Her silvery laugh was practiced enough to be almost golden.

"This place is rather fun, don't you think, Nina?" said the dark-eyed man. "Of course it's not completely decorated yet."

"They should hang all those mad glass balls with the fish net around them and those cactus fish from the ceiling — like Trader Vic's in New York," gestured Nina. "Oh I *am* sorry Duncan, I forgot you haven't been there . . . yet."

Josette threw back her head and sighed.

"You're so refreshing, Josette," said the beachy man.

They were passing around a drink called Mt. Vesuvius in what looked suspiciously like a cut-glass flower bowl. Originally the drink had four straws but now it had one, and it was still smoking, for it had been flaming when the Polynesian waiter brought it in.

"He's a dear when he's sober; and I'll always love him passionately," said Nina, readjusting her earring.

Duncan took off his shoes and said, "Now I'm really South Seas." Inside was a label that read "Custom Made."

"Oh wouldn't it be divine to live in the South Seas, to wear a flower behind your ear and catch a fish each morning for breakfast?"

"My insane Josette. My little Polynesian," said the beachy man.

Speaking of the South Seas and Gauguin, have you seen the exhibition at the Chiassi Gallery? It's from a private collection, mostly Impressionists—Monet, Degas, and a few Renoirs. Perfectly marvellous." Nina readjusted her foot on the mat.

"No, my sweet, I'd rather look at you," said Duncan. He kissed her shoulder.

The polynesian waiter came back and sat on his heels in front of them. "You like Mt. Vesuvius? I make you another?"

"No this was lethal. What was it in?" asked the beachy man.

"Seven kinds of rum and mango juice. I learned to make it in the Philippines."

"You have just come to this country?"

"Two years ago. I have a wife and two kids in New York. I send them money, and someday they come here to Florida to live."

"Do you mean that drink cost eight dollars?" said Duncan, looking at the check. "You don't even have decorations here." He put down a twenty dollar bill.

They pulled themselves up by clutching the bamboo wall. Nina patted her hair and her mink and said, "There's no morality among the Philippines."

"Let's all go to Nina's for a nightcap," suggested Duncan.

Josette laughed. "Aloha," she said.

SOUL OF A STAR

LITTLE TAD had never seen a dead person before. As he sat on the front steps in the warm, summer evening he thought about ol' Miz Tuckey's funeral that afternoon. It had been hot and stuffy in the little chapel, but for Little Tad the funeral itself was fascinating. The room had been full of people. Everybody in town must have been there. All the mourners wore black clothes, and the women mostly were crying. Lying in her coffin, Miz Tuckey looked like she was alive, jusy asleep, except that her face was a lighter, funny color. The minister had told them all about Miz Tuckey's life; afterwards a good many of the people had gone out to the graveyard. Little Tad didn't go, though, it was too hot, and his Sunday collar chafed his neck; besides, a graveyard was a spooky place for a little boy to be.

He ran his fingers through his kinky black hair and contemplated the day's events. Pretty soon his Granny came out and sat down in her old, rickety, wicker rocking chair. She began to rock gently, to and fro, to and fro, while the chair squeaked in rhythm. "Granny," said Little Tad, "what happens to somebody when they die?"

"Their soul goes out of their body, Little Tad, and then it goes to heaven."

He looked up at the starry sky and hugged his bare, brown knees. With one big toe he drew a circle in the dirt of the front yard. "Is Miz Tuckey's soul in heaven, yet?"

"I reckon so, Little Tad, I reckon so."

"Granny, what does a soul do in heaven?"

The old woman was silent for a few minutes, thinking. Finally she spoke. "You see those stars in the sky, Little Tad? Those stars lookin' down at all the world? Well, every soul that goes to heaven has a star. Some souls are better than other souls. The best ones are the biggest, brightest stars, and the ones that aren't as good are the little stars. See the Milky Way, stretchin' there across the sky?"

"Yes, Granny."

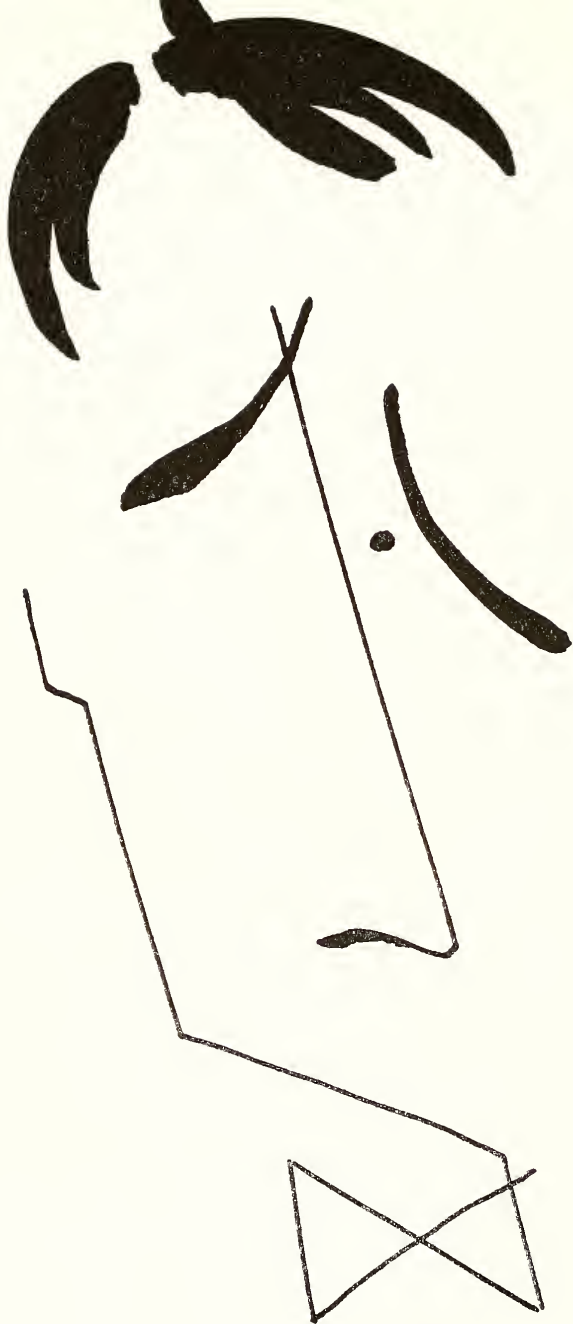
"That Milky Way has millions and millions of little bitty stars in it. They're the souls of bad people with just a little bit of good in 'em. Just enough to get into heaven. The stars sit up in the sky and look down at all the world. They watch everything that goes on. They even see you, sittin' there on the step; and when you see a fallin' star, Little Tad, there's a soul that's made God angry, and He threw it out of heaven, and it just has to fall and fall, and it just keeps fallin' till it goes to the bad place under the world, and there it stops. Then it's in darkness for the rest of all time. The darkness is so dark that the soul doesn't see or know anything, it only sees black all around it. That's all."

Again Little Tad looked at the stars. Now they seemed to come alive, to wink at him more than ever. They seemed to look down and say, with a twinkle,

"Good evenin', little Tad. We see you, all right, and we know what you're thinkin'. You're lookin' for ol' Miz Tuckey's star and wonderin' if someday your soul will have a star, too."

Little Tad was looking and thinking so hard that he didn't notice how quiet Granny was. Finally it occurred to him that she had not said anything for a long time, and he turned around to see if she had gone to sleep. "Granny?" he asked softly. There was no reply. He got up and touched her shoulder, fingering the faded pink shawl that she always wore and thinking how thin and wrinkled up her old hands were. Granny never moved, at all. Suddenly Little Tad was afraid; his heart felt all tight. Little Tad looked up at the sky. A bright, new star winked down at him.





Jana

Please Excuse Me

THE first coming-out party of our year was given for one of my classmates at the Winsor School on the night of our Graduation. My father drove me to the dance, a common situation in Boston, which boasts its unique usher system. I was embarrassed at having no escort, so I tried to walk into the house and upstairs to leave my coat in Toni's room without anyone seeing me. I found, for moral support, two girls who had had courtesy rides from a dinner party and so had no boys to meet them downstairs either. We went down together, to face the music and the ushers.

The staircase was an enormous neo-Jacobean carved oak affair which was built for entrances. It bent its way around two landings to the front hall-parlor where Toni and her mother stood before a wide fireplace that was in the same stile as the staircase. Doors on either side of the fireplace led to another parlor, beyond which was a walnut panelled library. The rooms looked bare with the rugs gone from the parquet floors and the furniture — comfortable heirlooms — pushed to the walls.

At the bottom of the stairs we stood and looked about the room for an usher, while trying to appear not to notice. We must have resembled one of those pictures of geese or giraffes in Ylla's books. A boy wearing a red carnation in his button-hole came toward us, smiling smoothly as he gestured calmly toward the stag-line for two more ushers and three "dancing men" (as Emily Post persists in calling stags.) One of my moral supporters stepped forward to meet our usher and was led off to the receiving line on his arm. The stag, who was on his other arm, turned to mouth back unintelligible somethings to his cohorts who were following him to the slaughter.

Another young man, wearing a white carnation which signified he was head usher, and a close friend or relative of the hostess, appeared and asked my name.

"Jenny Keyes," I answered obligingly. He didn't smile or say hi or anything welcoming, just, "What was that again?"

"Jenny Keyes," I repeated. I was used to this, "K-E-Y-E-S, Kaiz." I pronounced the "i" so he would be sure to get it. He then asked the stag his name and introduced us to each other. We stood there silently until the line moved up and he introduced us to our hostesses. Toni was all smiles and polite platitudes and obviously more excited to see the stag than me. Finally we were dancing to "The Music of Ruby Newman."

"What did he say your name was?" asked my partner.

"I don't know what he said it was," said I, trying to be clever, "But it's Jenny Keyes."

"Oh," he said in the tone I had learned meant that he hadn't understood and wasn't interested enough to try again.

"And you're Jim Franklin," I said, trying to be gay and chatty. I wished Bobby would get there. Bob was the brother of my best friend, Sally, and had agreed to take us to any parties he was going to, as long as we found someone else to take us home. He was good for at least one dance, if only because he hadn't brought me and felt a little guilty about that. Of course, he was crashing, and it wouldn't have been too wise for me to walk in with him in that case, but I was nursing the last remains of a two year crush on him, which was slightly encouraged since he had broken up with the girl he had dated for six years and was definitely looking around.

"Where do you go to school?" I continued to my partner.

"Young lady," he answered, "Don't ever ask a college man where he goes to school. He'll think you think he's in prep-school. I go to Harvard." I knew he was a freshman.

"Oh," I said trying not to blush, and at the same time recognizing in my voice the same tone he had used when I told him my name. "Where did you go before that?" He had probably gone to Milton or Nobles or St. Paul's or St. Mark's or any of twenty-five or thirty schools. The only advantage in finding out was that we could play "Do You Know?"

The conversation was not sparkling and I was relieved when someone cut in. Just the fact that someone had cut in was a compliment, when it was quite obvious to even the most casual observer that my partner and I were not having an absolute ball and therefore anyone who cut in on me ran the risk of getting stuck for God knew how long. I looked up, expecting to see Bobby or some one of the older brothers of our crowd, but instead found it was a boy I had never seen before that morning but had met at two graduations in one day..

"Hi. You're Jenny Keyes," he said as we began dancing. "I'm Peter Hohlen. Do you make a hobby of going to graduations?"

"I was about to ask you the same thing," I said. "But how do you know my name?"

"I get around," he said. He danced well, very smoothly, with more variation than most boys. He spoke with a slight accent, which was unfamiliar to me. It was one of my greatest desires to be able to place any accent, never to forget a name or face, to talk intelligently on any subject, especially obscure ones, and always to be able to say the right thing. I have seldom succeeded in any of these.

"But tell me," he continued, "Do you know someone who graduated from Concord today?"

"Most of the class," I answered casually. "Who do you know? or do you just go to girls' school commencements for entertainment?" I could see him smiling sardonically to himself at our solemn antics, or perhaps, with supreme European disdain, pondering the ritualism of the uncivilized Americans aping the meaningful ceremonies of their elders.

"Oh, I went to the Concord one as proxy for my roommate whose sister was graduating. He, poor boy, had an exam. I came to yours at the invitation of one of the girls."

"Who?" I persisted, realizing, after I had spoken, that it wasn't polite to be that curious.

He answered me easily, offhandedly, "Linda Roberts." I decided he didn't mind my asking. Remembering my last partner's admonition, I tried to think of a new way of asking where he went to school. I decided to risk a mistake.

"Are you at Harvard?" It was important to me to know all the pertinent facts about every boy I met that night. I had to be able to say, casually, "You know Peter Hohlen, don't you? From Prague, a senior at Harvard; his father's in the diplomatic corps. Well, he cut in . . ." when I told Sally about it over coffee on the terrace the next morning.

"No. M. I. T.," he said. I'd done it again. I was afraid he would be insulted, but once more his inflection indicated he didn't mind my clumsiness in social repartée.

"Where are you from?" I asked. For some reason it was impossible for me to stop the Dragnet dialogue. I really wanted to know, to find out what the accent was.

"Originally or currently?" he rejoined.

"Both," I answered.

"Originally Vienna, currently Paris." He kicked my instep as he spoke. It was accidental but it hurt. "I AM sorry. Please forgive me," he apologised.

"It's nothing," I said, hoping I hadn't winced. "It was my fault for not keeping my feet out of your way. I'll try to do better from now on. Tell me about Paris." I could hear my mother saying, "Don't ask direct questions, and don't ask general ones either."

"What do you want to hear?" he asked. I tried to think of something I wanted to know about Paris.

"Do you have coming-out parties like this? Or subscription dances?" I was really desperate. I can't remember his answer because I was trying to think of something witty to say. I was about to say it when he kicked me again on exactly the same spot as before. It hurt worse this time, and our mutual apologies were embarrassing us both. I had to get away from the subject and my brilliant comment was no longer apropos.

"Is European dancing different from ours? Do boys dislike waltzing as much as American boys do?" I asked hurriedly. I loved to waltz but had a hard time finding a boy who would waltz with me. While he covered this one thoroughly, a boy dancing past us winged my ear with his elbow.

"Our dancing is just as dangerous, any way," said Peter, when I ducked, too late. "Dancing is a natural manifestation of exuberance, and dancers can get carried away to the point of being wholly inconsiderate. I've seen a very smooth Italian so excited that he swept his partner over the edge of a raised dance-floor and into the rose bush border." He was a talker I decided. It was fine with me.

"What do you think of the girl who firmly plants her high-heel into your instep? or the boy who slices your Achilles tendon with his toe?" I asked, hoping after I'd spoken, that he wouldn't think I was referring to my own throbbing instep. Apparently he did, for as he answered me he kicked me again, this time probably from nervousness.

"Not much. You get used to them though," he said.

"I don't," I told him vehemently. "I have built up a defense. If I'm sufficiently agitated, I kick back. I've learned how to plant the old heel where it's felt most. All it takes is eyes in the back of your head and good aim." I really didn't mean this as a warning, I was just making conversation. I had, at times, been mad enough to try, but usually I missed and lost my balance. It sounded like a good idea though.

"Let's have some champagne," suggested Peter, nervously. I agreed and we went out the French doors of the long living room to the terrace. There was a

marquée between the two back wings of the house, lighted by japanese lanterns and candles in chianti bottles on the scattered tables. We found a table and Peter, after seating me, left to get some champagne.

I looked around the terrace. There were flowers banked at either end, in corners of the house walls, on the window sills, on the food tables; any bare spot had been filled with flowers. There were white carnations, snap-dragons, chrysanthemums, even bridal stephanotis. There were pink roses and camellias, red carnations, roses and tulips. On each of the small tables was a shallow bowl with a gardenia floating in it. I decided that at my party, that Wednesday, we would use lily-of-the-valley, deustia, delphinium and forget-me-not, and those sparingly. The fact that Mother had decided on masses of red and white geraniums didn't discourage me.

There were two long tables, covered with the caterer's white cloths, silver, champagne glasses and food. Peter was waiting at one while the waiter poured out two glasses of champagne. Peter was tall — over six feet — with light brown, curly hair, blue eyes, fair skin and the usual features. He had an exceptionally straight nose and a charming smile. It was his smile that had attracted me when I first ran into him — literally — at the gate to the gym at school. I was going back to find my parents after the ceremony and he was coming out with the first exodus of guests.

Apparently, I thought, our relationship was to consist entirely of apologies. At the Concord graduation I had come late and found a seat at the back of the garden where Commencement was being held, without disturbing anyone but the the three young men sitting just ahead of me. As I sat down, they turned around to see who it was, and I begged their pardon for distracting them. They were two older brothers of good friends of mine — Bobby and Sean — and Peter.

I was convinced he was suave, cultured, charming — until I met him. When I learned he was a friend of Linda Roberts' (and apparently the man of the hour if she had invited him to graduation,) I was even more impressed. But each time he answered a question with pompous verbiage, even giving him credit for speaking a language not his own, and each time he kicked my instep, he became more human. Now, as I sat at the little table waiting for him to bring me some champagne, I realized that he was a colossal bore.

I looked over at the living room doors through which I could see young ladies and gentlemen sedately fox-trotting to Ruby Newman's "Businessman's Bounce." The stagline blocked one of the French doors with male backs, familiar in their dinner-jacketed uniformity. Two of them turned around to face outside, presumably as an unappreciated girl was danced the length of the line by her mortified partner. One of the stags was Bobby. I stared at him, hoping he would look at me, and for once the technique worked. Bob and his companion, Sean, came over to the table and sat down.

"How's the wall-flower business tonight?" Bob asked, grinning.

"Going bankrupt, thank you," I answered cheerfully, knowing from experience that if I even intimated I was the least bit bored he would leave. Peter, showing an unexpected sense of good timing, returned with the champagne.

"A sterling idea!" said Sean and he went to get some for himself. I tried to think of an immortal quip to throw into the void, but I couldn't. I was sure Bobby didn't like Peter very much, he hates stuffed shirts.

"Does one of you gentlemen have a cigarette you would give to a poor girl?" I finally asked. My own cigarettes were in the embroidered purse I was clutching in my lap, but I had to say something. Peter brought forth a gold cigarette case filled with du Mauriers and Bobby offered a Pall Mall. I took the du Maurier, figuring I could explain to Bob later, but that Peter would be hurt if I refused his. He offered them to Bob too, who politely accepted one, so I was sure he understood.

"Not a bad cigarette, for a filter," said Bob when he had lit them from Peter's elegant lighter. "Where do you get them?"

"A little place on Mass. Ave," replied Peter. "They have any kind of tobacco you could want, domestic or imported." Sean returned with champagne and a plate full of cakes and cookies.

"They taste abominable with champagne," he said, "but they're free." He turned to Peter, "Is this the doll you were asking us about? It's only little Jenny. I wanted to squelch him for that but he went on, "How did you finally find out who she is?"

"I looked her up in Linda's yearbook," said Peter. I glowed..

"What do you say to digging out for the dance floor?" Bobby asked me in a stage whisper.

"Let's go," I said. "Will you two excuse us?" Peter and Sean were earnestly discussing Linda and some of the other girls in our class, so Bob and I left.

Bobby was not the best dancer I knew, but at least I didn't have to worry about conversation with him. Most of the time I could say anything I wanted to Bob. I told him about Peter kicking me and he laughed. "Big disillusionment, huh?"

"Yes, to tell the truth," I said. "I had him down for a real smooth snow-king. He must be to be dating Linda."

"Not necessarily. Do you know who she was dating before him? The biggest loser in Dunster House," he said. "She talks a good game."

At that point Peter and Linda came into the room and joined the mass of motion on the dance floor.

"Bobby," I said with inspiration, "how would you like to do me a favor?"

"What is it?" he asked warily.

"Dance up to Peter and Linda and put me in position to kick him back."

Bobby chuckled demonically, and danced us around the room until I had my back to Peter's right arm.

"Okay," said Bob, and he stepped forward, so I had to step backward. Taking a deep breath and a long step, I placed the heel of my blue satin slipper on Peter's instep, and put my weight on it.

"Oh! Please excuse me," I managed to say with an apologetic smile, as Bobby spun me around and into the crowd.

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SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR VIRGINIA
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MAY, 1959

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KATHLEEN MATHER

This is a translation of an excerpt from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Das Stundenbuch* (Von der Armut und vom Tode) Written in Paris, in 1903. Printed with the permission of Insel-Verlag, Weisbaden, Germany.

. . . **F**OR the great city is accursed;
the panic of fire broods in her breast;
she cannot wait
and their time is too short.

There, men, unsatisfied, struggle to live
and die, not knowing why they suffered;
and none of them saw the pitiful grimace risen from the
depths of nameless nights,
effacing the smile of a faithful people.

They wander, debased through service
to a senseless cause
their clothes become worn,
their hands weaken too early.
The crowd jostles them and moves on, indifferent,
though they be weak and hesitant;
only the homeless dog follows them
in a moment of silence.

They have been delivered to a multitude of tyrants,
and the passing of each hour is painful;
alone, they circle the hospitals
awaiting their admission in anguish.

Death is there. Not the death whose voice
touched them miraculously in childhood,
but the little death, the death understood there
while their own hangs in them like a fruit,
bitter and green.

O God, grant unto each man his own death,
death born of a life which knew love and misery.
For we are but the shell and leaf of that fruit;
the nucleus,
the great death within us.
For her the young girl flowers,
the boy yearns for manhood
and women are confidants to the adolescent fear which
no other would welcome.
For her the object remains eternal, though decomposed
with age,
and each who strives to create builds the congealing and
thawing universe around her.
All warmth of heart and passion of mind might have
nourished her,
but Your angels came in flocks and found this fruit unripe.

O Lord, we are poorer than the poor beasts
which, though blind, achieve their own death.
Oh give us the force and the science to join our lives
to the trellis,
and spring shall come early.

This death is strange and difficult;
not the end which is due us, but the other which carries
us away and strips us bare
before our own is ripe.
We stand in Your garden year after year,
as trees which might have borne sweet death but instead,
age with the autumn days,
and, like those women You have struck with infertility,
are closed and barren.
Or is my pride unjust? Are trees better?
Should we be likened to women who have given
too much of themselves?
We have prostituted ourselves to eternity,
and bear in misery the false fruit of our death
and the shriveled and pitiful foetus hides its face in
its hands as if menaced by some unknown terror,
and already its bulging forehead bears the mark
of agony yet to be suffered,
and we die like the young girl in childbirth, our wombs
ripped open.

O God, make man great and saintly.
Give him one night profound, infinite, that he may reach
further than ever before.
Give him one night of life's springtime, and may that
night be fragrant, light as the breath of winds,
and joyful as Jehoshaphat.
Let him attain maturity; let him expand and let his
vastness encompass the universe.
Yet give him the solitude of a star, that not the merest
glance disturb him in the hour of his convulsion.
Let the memories of childhood gladden his heart.
Reveal to him again the wondrous world of his first years
filled with presentiment.
Let him live until the hour when he shall give birth to his
own death,
replete with the echoes of a great garden
or like the traveler returned from afar . . .

ELIZABETH MEADE

Wind

I CANNOT hear the wind. But
I saw it move a purple leaf,
And run into a parrot's tail.
Strange it never said a word.

A Card Game

LIFE begins at the beginning
and ends at the end.
Past, present, and future
merge into all that is.

The air is thick and pungent
with the smells of my childhood.
Days that were too long,
Days that were too short.

I have forgotten the sadness
and I remember the lasting hours.
I think I was happy.

I do not want to know
what is ahead of me.
I shall play my cards
as they are dealt.

I hope to master poker
and match the Dealer.

Fragments

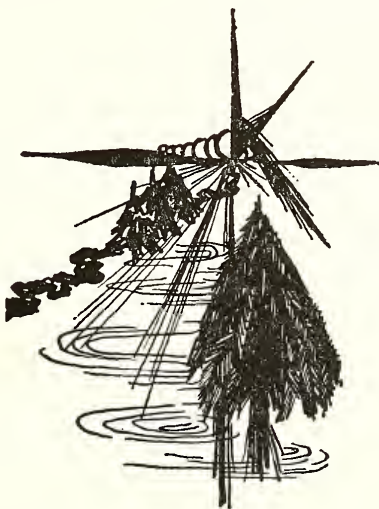
THE Creative Writing classes at Sweet Briar and Mary Washington Colleges were given the same assignment: to write a critical and biographical paper on a very modern poet, using short excerpts from his or her works. The real problem was that the poets had to be imaginary.

When the papers were done, Mrs. Evelyn Eaton, who teaches both courses, arranged for a reading of the criticisms at Mary Washington. The BRAMBLER has chosen these fragments from the Sweet Briar poets whose works were presented at the reading.

LUCIE THRASHER

"HE WENT back to Caro and Baxley, and Eastman—back to Georgia towns that he knew as a child. The last words we heard from him before the telegram telling of his death were written on a nickel post-card.

They have choked my cities with fingers of neon
Purple ribbons of asphalt smother the Georgia clay
Pines burdened with industry's soot
Hang limp over oily streams."



Lucy

JULIE R. JOHNSON

"MISS CATHERINE SALISBURY has the fantasy of youth to give to her public, and she defines the experiences, the joys and disappointments and pain she has experienced with a lucidity and an honesty rarely found in the writers of today's poetry.

She writes of her feeling of confinement in college:

You blank green walls
Shameless confessor of
Muttering, shadowy halls."

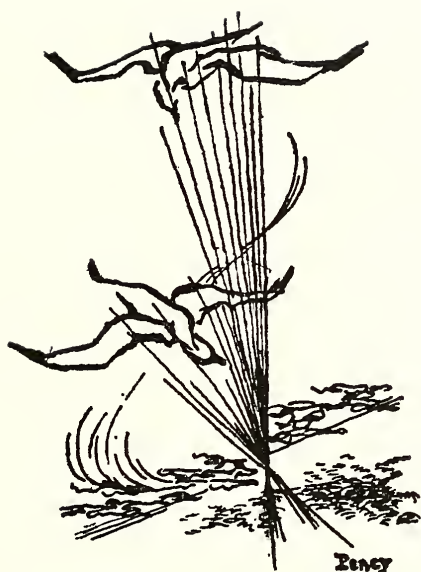
SALLY HAMILTON

"JOE MAXWELL, born March 16, 1932, in Evansville, Georgia, is one of America's best contemporary Negro poets.

He lives the life of a typical Southern Negro. His large calloused hands and weary face tell of his life.

He is unsure of his purpose in life.

I wander—here, there, nowhere,
Yet I am going somewhere.
Where I do not know, do not care.
Going satisfies me."



"THE crashing waves cry out,
Not in anger . . .but in yearning
Only the seagulls
Screaming . . .
Answer the call."

How right those lines are. How well they describe Jonathan. I never remember the first night we met, without thinking of the teaming rain and the lonely, yet lovely, stretch of back road along the Gloucester shore."

WHILE the Sweet Briar Creative Writing Class was at Mary Washington College for the reading of papers on Modern Poets, the editors of the two colleges effected an exchange of material. We are pleased to publish here a poem by an outstanding poet at Mary Washington College.

NATALIE SUE ROBINS

THE GIFT

I WALKED slowly through the wooden cast
which leaned upon the icebird
and called to a silent crow:
"morning after this you die."
because he cared more for the golden
dish I held in distant awe,
he walked upon the level of my scream
and waited for my turn.
ahead was a key of dusty rain,
and beyond that was my Hill.
I walked slowly through the wooden cast
and disappeared within the
icy grave:
my feathered gift had climbed beyond
its worth.



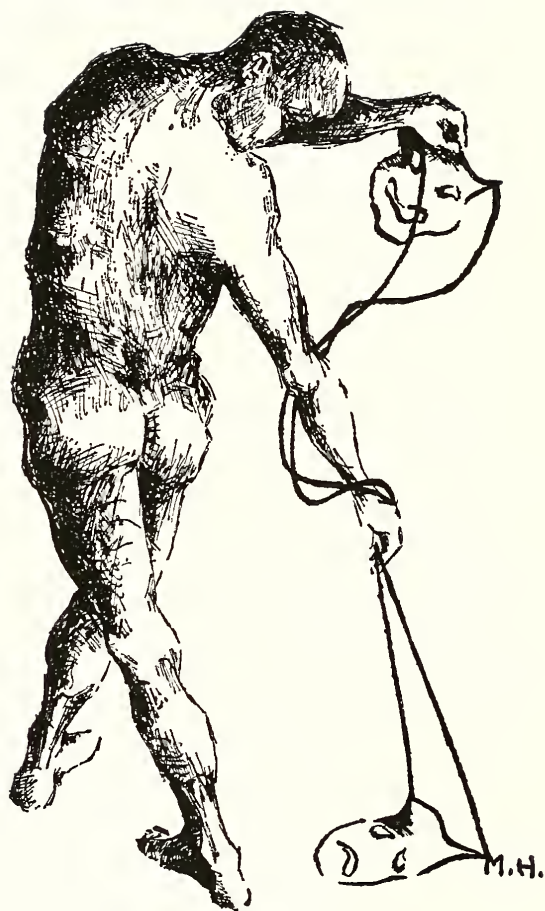
SUZY SHIMEK

why do we wait
rummaging about in old trunks
and misery-boxes burping dirt

all these crates filled
with would-bes
lustrous loves
with almost-eyes
round-tables,
bubbles broiled like canapes on crackers
in the kiln of thought.

but what is this?
righteous reunion of spirit and self?
penance for sorrow.
has anyone served time for sorrow?

at once the cobra head
spreads swinging
strikes, subsides.



PAINT AND PATCHES

THE play is over. Those dames will go on spinning
somewhere out of sight. The rack of practised
pain is stashed away with paper lights
and windows. Empty words now rattle about
the brain like poltergeists. Truth unravels
in an absent minded wind. Shall fancy fly
like last year's rockets to the eerie stars?
Or Hamlet pine away for ill-laid ghosts?
Lear be drowned in tears among mere maids?
We tear away our mask to find another,
faces real, unreal. The lonely selves
we mocked thrive on in London or in Rye.
The foolish goat cavorted and was bled.
Kore danced her night and now has vanished.
Moments of truth are sixty years or more.
Madness! Love! Deceit! The play goes on!

ELIZABETH FEW

Impressions of a Fraternity Party

(With Apologies to Dame Edith Sitwell)

PANDEMONIUM stands on her podium
reigning the red lion
who swings from the chandelier
while the tin-can hand
jerks and is jerked
by the twitch-string monkey
(moving in rock-and-roll pentameter.)

Disembodied notes
jump in the dust
and join the quiet crumbling
clinking of paper cup ice.
Chaos capers.



LISTEN, the sound of snow.
Listen, the voice through ruffled wires
and listen, the slapping, clapping, the fire's
not speaking now.

Listen the hand-song
Sculpting form from senseless clay.
Beginning includes the mourning day,
" . . . in the beginning." What?
Sound in light, sound in smoke,
Sound comes swimming into honey pools
and out of vinegar.
Feet-sound shuffle, stumble, stick
on gravel, gum, grapefruit peel.
Pulse-sound, pulp-sound, paper-out-of-rags-sound.
Let's-be-still-sound, if-you-will-sound.
Sometimes I do not want my ears.



DE CASIBUS

N THE most secret hour
I came to you, Absalom;
You wispered a story
Of an old king dead
And a beast in the night.

The Three

THE air is thick and greasy green.
Purple ego jerks stacatto beat.
The icy black of greed and hate
Stimulate a greater Me.

The id pursues a deeper channel
Beneath a sea of angry waves.
The I, the Self, shall vanquish All
Or stop the palpitating Mind.

The super ego sinks—falls
To rule below by radar beat.
Three are the only ones who know
The bombast of the human beast.

Apathy

YES,

you run through your patterned paces,
your life revolves in apathetic cycles,
you love in robot fashion.

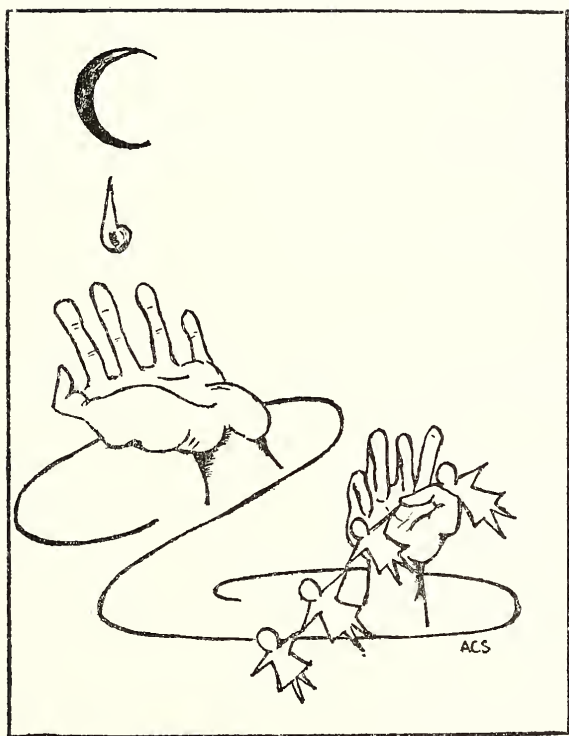
Yes,

you belong to a paper-doll world;
a world in blissless darkness,
a world whose gates are closed

To the symphony of sounds in a rain storm,
To a spider-web staircase through the trees,
To the sea shivering in her moon-drenched cloak.

Live on you paper-people,
You whose lives are patterned,
Live on in your pathless world.
I am glad you live within your sterile walls.

My paradise will remain hidden from your rat-like eyes
I can roam through dew-drenched fields alone.
My world is dead to you.



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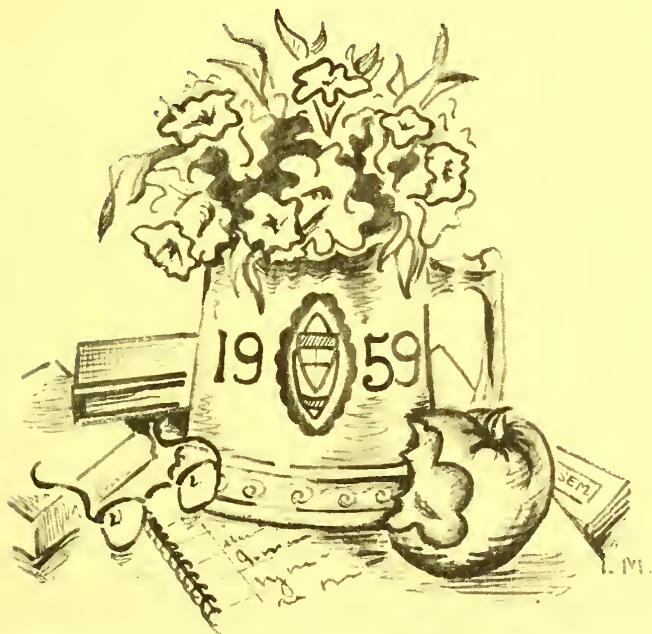
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THE BRAMBLER



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VOLUME 36, No. 4

JUNE, 1959

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SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

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The Brambler

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THE TWO-HEADED BABY

"STEP right up 'n' see the two-headed baby!" yelled the man. Amanda Adams clutched her little sister's hand.

"Ouch, Mandy! . . . I want some cotton candy, please," said Louisa, changing her tone of voice charmingly. Meanwhile, that man was screaming at them again. It was almost more than Amanda could bear. "Why doesn't it cool off? I wish that dirty man would shut up! Weezy wants candy. I only have a dollar," she thought

". . . yeah, two-headed baby! That's right, lady. If ya don't believe me . . ." said the man, as if the only things in the world were two-headed babies. He looked as if he needed a haircut and a shave. The poor woman standing in front of him hugged a large cheap-looking handbag and was staring up into his face.

Amanda turned away and absent-mindedly pulled Weezy up from where she was squatting in the dust playing with a beetle. "What would Mother think if she knew we were here?" she thought. This certainly was different from their usual afternoon walks. Her mother worried so. Honestly, one minute late getting home and there might as well have been an accident.

"Two-headed baby! Twenty-five cents!" Amanda ignored the man's cry. "I know he's screaming at me." At that moment, Weezy's sweaty little fist tugged her finger. She looked down at the curly golden head and the up-turned face. It was beautiful, but it wanted something.

"Mandy, don't you want some candy?" came with the next tug.

"No, thank you, Weezy," said Amanda, wondering if this would work.

"Like some cotton can - - -"

"Oh, all right!" She was surprised at herself for losing her temper so suddenly; "Must be the weather," she thought.

They walked slowly over to the green stand three booths down from that screaming man. He had the loudest voice at the carnival and there were plenty of others that could yell very well. The green stand had flies on it and ragged looking little boys clustered around the glass window of the machine in the corner. The stupid, sloppy-looking young man in a white hat finally noticed Amanda.

"Yeah?" He chewed his gum twice before she answered.

"One cotton candy, please. Pink."

"It's all pink. Didn' cha know?" He sounded bored and Amanda was almost glad. She stared straight ahead at the gooey pink lump on the counter and wondered: "What would a two-headed baby look like? Ugh! Could it be alive?"

"Here y'are. Ten cents," said the boy. Amanda reached up, paid him and took the candy. Weezy sat down in the dust. This time her dress got dirty. "Get up, Weezy!" Amanda grabbed her by the sleeve and pulled. At the same time the man yelled, "Step right up and see the two-headed baby!" Weezy looked up with a frown, then seeing the candy, screamed, reached for it, and missed. She jerked Amanda's arm and the cotton candy got on her sundress.

"Oh, Weezy, Mother'll be so mad at us! My dress is all stained!" She pushed her hair out of her face and thought: "Maybe we ought to go for a ride on the ferris wheel. After all, that's what we came for." She looked around and there it was, way over on the other side of the carnival grounds. "It's so far and there're so many people . . . I hate crowds. I wish I were at home reading a book . . . or else if Daddy were with us . . ."

They were walking slowly over the dusty ground. Weezy was being good compared with her behavior during the rest of the afternoon. "'Behavior!'" thought Amanda, ". . . one of Mother's favorite words. But Weezy's not bad. She's better with me than Mother. She's a wonderful child and she'll be beautiful, too. Aunt Emma said so. Aunt Emma and Mother'll probably be having tea at home now. No, it's too early. If they only knew . . . we should be sitting in the park now." She looked up and there was the man again. He was wearing a horrible yellow shirt made of waffled nylon. The top button was missing. Amanda slowed down and stopped. He looked right at her and started to talk. She turned quickly and pretended to study the sign on the side of the carnival wagon.

"Hey, girly! There's a two-headed baby in there." Tired of pretending, Amanda turned her head and stared boldly at him.

"If ya don't believe me, it'll only cost ya one quarter—that's twenty-five cents—ta find out." She still stared. He grinned horribly and stared back at her. His teeth were yellow.

"No, thank you, not right now," she said. She did not want to hurt his feelings and she was almost always polite.

"Better be now, we close at five," he said as Amanda started to walk away. ". . 'til six," he added meaningly. "Five," she thought. "Weezy and I eat at five. I wonder if these people eat at five, too. When does a two-headed baby eat?"

Somebody yelled, "Step right up! Three balls for twenty-five cents. Hit the milk bottles . . . Hey, you!" The voice went on more casually, "Bet cha want a cewpie doll—don' cha little girl?" Amanda did not feel like looking at him. It sounded like an old man. "Couldn't be more horrible than *the* man, though." She looked around at the people passing her in every direction thinking: "How peculiar they are! I don't remember them from the carnivals with Daddy. I wonder if he'd think they were strange . . . How do you spell cewpie? What story was that with the sailor who won one? . . . Weezy's certainly quiet." Amanda looked down. Weezy was having one-handed trouble with the cotton candy: she jerked Amanda's hand and looked up for help. Amanda separated her from the pink stuff.

"Thank you, Mandy . . . don't you want some?" "Probably getting tired of it," Amanda guessed, and said, "No, thanks. C'mon, we'd better hustle if we're going on the ferris wheel." She dragged Weezy by the hand past the rest of the booths and sighed as they sank into a seat. The attendant snapped the bar shut.

Amanda loved ferris wheels and Weezy was so excited she couldn't speak. She sat still with her hands clenched on the bar and looked up at the top. Amanda looked around and thought, "If there's anything at carnivals everybody enjoys,

it's a ferris wheel. Much more exciting than a merry-go-round." The two women in the seat behind them were laughing and a little boy with an extra loud voice was waiting to get on. The ferris wheel turned and soon they were sitting on top of everything. The carnival spread out behind them looked as insignificant as a bunch of match boxes. Amanda looked down and saw the green booth and the top of the juvenile-delinquent-looking boy's head. The world was so far away. "What if this breaks? We've been up here a long time. Funny . . . I've never been scared on a ferris wheel before." She looked down again to see if the booths were still there and instead saw a yellow speck moving violently. She realized that it must be the man with the two-headed baby. He was trying to attract a customer. "I actually want to see it," she thought. "What if I did? Maybe I'd even tell Mother. I bet she'd have a purple kitten!" The ferris wheel jerked and they started slowly down. The breeze felt good. Her stomach felt as if it were in an elevator every time their seat started down. "No, I can't," she went on thinking. "I haven't got time." She glanced at the sun. "It's too late . . . if there were yesterday—or even tomorrow—we'd be walking by Morrison's awful statue now. His horse has a cute face though . . . oh, well, I can wait 'til tomorrow."

They got off the ferris wheel and walked quickly toward the exit at the other end. They passed the man with the two-headed baby and were walking by the cotton candy man when Weezy came out of her trance.

"Mandy, I want more cotton candy!" It was an order.

"Weezy, no!" Amanda was horrified. They stopped.

"C'mon, Mandy, I won't tell Mommy," she whined. Amanda knew she shouldn't let her have it, but the trip home would be much more pleasant if she did. She calculated quickly. "Ten more cents and I'll have thirty for tomorrow . . . then Sunday and allowance. I won't need it anyway . . ."

"O. K., Weezy."

The young man was still chewing gum but was distracted from it long enough to fill Amanda's order. "Here y'are. Ten cents," he said, handing the candy over the counter. Amanda started to take it. His grip tightened. She paid him with her other hand. He let go and laughed nervously.

"Step right up 'n' see the two-headed baby!" yelled the man.

"Again!" Amanda said and murmured, "that's all that old gypsy's said all afternoon."

Weezy looked puzzled. "What?"

Amanda thought, "Yes, what! What of it! I'm going anyway." "Let's go, Weezy."

"Goody. Where'm I going?"

"Ugh!" she thought, "I'll have to leave her outside. She'll be all right with her candy."

They stopped in front of the man. He propped his elbows on the stand and his head on his hands and said, "Well, ya just made it! Five more minutes 'n' I'm goin' ta dinner." He looked tired, if that were possible. "Doesn't matter," Amanda said to herself, "Dinner in five minutes."

"I won't be long. Is the baby in there?" "That's a stupid question!" she realized as soon as she'd said it.

"Sure it's in there!"

"Is it alive?"

"Why'ncha go in and see? Only twenty-five cents."

"I have a quarter," she said, realizing that this was silly to say, too.

"Good, I've got a two-headed baby," he said as he laughed. Amanda blushed.

"Is it alive?" she insisted.

"Sure." His smile disappeared. Amanda was relieved; she didn't like his yellow teeth: the shirt alone was bad enough.

"Well, are ya gonna see it or not? Look! I gotta - - -"

"I suppose so," she said and put the quarter in his grimy hand. "I guess I want to see it . . ." she thought.

"Go right up the stairs, lady in there'll tell ya 'bout it," he said quickly and yelled, "Hey, Francie—customer!"

Amanda left Weezy close to the stairs on the far side from the man. She walked up, put her hand on the knob, and paused. The door swung open and she almost fell backwards. She was scared. There was an ugly woman with no lower teeth standing before her.

"Come right in, dearie!" Amanda stepped shakily into the dark carnival wagon. It was close in there and smelled like an attic.

"W-wh-where is it?" she said, hating herself for stammering. The woman giggled shrilly and pointed to a table at the far end of the room; she looked like a witch but she wore a turquoise dress that was more like a curtain than anything else.

Amanda held her breath and walked over to the table. There was a big glass jar with a rusty top sitting on it. She tried to see but it had been so bright outside that she could hardly see at all.

"It's pickled!" she thought and could feel the tears coming to her eyes. "Just a pickled pig! . . . or is it a calf?" It had two heads all right, but it was so old and the fluid around it was so murky that it might not have ever lived.

"Sure it's real," said the woman, seeming to read her thoughts. Amanda felt sick. The jar and the table seemed to move. She looked at the floor and thought, "I won't faint. Sick, either. I WON'T!"

A floor board squeaked and she jumped slightly. Her stomach seemed to leap once and then was as still as stagnant water.

"Well, don' cha wanta hear about it? You're not very curious. What's the matter? Cat got yer tongue?" She giggled again. It was so horrible that Amanda felt tired. She looked at the monster determinedly and tried to wipe the tears from her cheek.

A fly landed on the top of the jar and rubbed its front legs together. Amanda watched it. It buzzed loudly and she thought angrily, "I wonder if it's selling something too . . . That man lied to me. Lied!" The fly flew away. ". . . but I almost feel sorry for him. And that horrible woman. Is she his wife?" She walked to the door: "I'll never tell mother," she thought as she opened it.

The breeze outside was cool. Weezy jumped up from the step where she had been waiting and hugged Amanda around the waist. Amanda smiled and they started walking.

"C'mon, Weezy, we'll be late. Let's hurry so I can help Mommy set the tab - - -"

"Where'd you go?" Weezy said impatiently.

"In there," Amanda pointed.

"What's that?"

"Nothing."

"O. K. . . . but Mand - - -"

"O. K.! C'mon, let's see if we can run all the way home."

The Eyes of Texas

"THIS damn jeep!" the Major swore again as we jerked over another bump—but quietly, so General Marshall wouldn't hear. "My God, what a way to travel!" I agreed silently, sure that my tail bone was shattered and I would spend the rest of my life standing up at meals. "Too bad Napoleon missed this one," I thought. "*Our* army fights on its rear! Wonder if the German jeeps have thicker cushions . . . but then I doubt if Hitler would ride in a jeep—probably has an air-conditioned limousine. Nothing but the best for Der Fuhrer."

We were somewhere in southern France, on our way to join Eisenhower. The main body of troops was about a half an hour's march in front of us. They marched; we rode. Lucky us. Lord, what I wouldn't give to be home, on my way to do some fishing, with Nancy driving our new Ford. It was a perfect day for it, sunny and hot as blazes. I knew just where we'd go, too. Walloon Lake. Northern Michigan was the closest thing to Heaven in the summer; the heat was light and dry, not heavy like this French stuff, and no tree in Europe was as beautiful as the white birch. I guess that's one thing Europe does—makes you appreciate home. I'll never complain about the dull life of a salesman again. No excitement. Ha! Hell, I'd rather be in South Ambrosia than on my way from war in Italy to war in France! Well, that's the breaks—life's tough.

"As soon as we get over this next hill, Private Polk, stop. I want to check these maps again." Marshall was a careful one all right, and a damn good general, too. You'd never know it, but he'd lost two sons at Normandy. He was grayer than he'd been in '44 and maybe the lines in his face were deeper; that was the only change. Men always snapped to when he was around. Being his aide was an experience. That's the way to look at it—the whole war's just one big experience. Sure it is . . .

We bounced again, and Major Evans groaned. I felt sorry for the guy; he'd had a rough time. He came over to be Marshall's aide expecting a nice plush job—billeting in all the fancy houses. The day after he got to Naples we moved out; It's been heat and dust or rain and mud all the way. Now me, I wanted a combat command to begin with, but the General needed another aide so here I am. They even promoted me—Lieutenant-Colonel Edwards, at your service, sir. Why? For carrying out orders, I guess. Beats me.

We were almost at the top of the hill; the jeep was slowing down. We swung around a curve, and, "Gawd in Heaven!" Polk shouted. "A barricade!" He stopped the jeep so fast Evans and I fell against the front seat. Closest I'd ever been to Marshall. Apparently we were out of range; nobody fired on us.

Well, there we were, sitting ducks for all we knew. Polk backed the jeep around the curve in a hurry, and the four of us sagged, sweating. The barricade was a thin, stubby little tree; the branches didn't even stretch all the way across. But we couldn't sneak around it on foot and get 'em from behind because there wasn't enough cover and the area was steep on both sides. We couldn't go back—and this was the only road.

"Maps?" Marshall said curtly. I shoved them forward. He was thinking the same thing I was—and it didn't take him long to reach the same conclusion. The only way to go was straight ahead.

"Oh Christ," Evans moaned, "we're going to die, I know we're going to die. I'm so far from home; I want to go home! I'm not a soldier, I'm a stock-broker. I don't want to be brave, I want to go home! Oh God, God, God—" "Shut up, Major!" I muttered savagely. "You won't die." And it wouldn't be much of a loss if he did. He had no kids, and his wife—I met her once in the states when Evans and I were both Majors. She was a real dame, restless, on the make—orchids and furs at Sardis. No thanks.

He was rocking back and forth sobbing, Evans the Brave, who had once bragged, "No Kraut can scare *me*! I'm the best shot in the army, and if I lose my rifle I'll use my teeth!" He'd been next-to-top-pin at the brokerage—he'd always be next-to-top. Civilian life had rounded and fattened him; he was a rotten soldier.

Marshall turned from his conversation with Polk. He watched me trying to calm Evans down, and then leaned over and slapped him twice, hard. That did it; the guy stopped as if he'd been turned off. He just sat there, with the tears dripping on his shiny buttons. The road block was maybe a hundred yards away. There wasn't a sound.

"Well, gentlemen," Marshall remarked quietly, "as I see it there's only one way to get past. We can't get around, or over, or under, so we'll have to go through it. Any other suggestions, Colonel Edwards?"

"No, sir, I guess that's our best chance." Chance! I could feel the tenseness tingle through my body, and the sweat on my face and neck. It was suicide. Free will, deciding to race right into a trap. "Here we are, boys, have a few corpses."

"See if you can get Major Evans down. Otherwise, he'll be killed." Good old Marshall, never upset, never stopped thinking about his men. Nobody ever got to be buddies with him—we wouldn't dare—but we all respected him like hell. Only once I'd seen him show emotion. A young corporal had been picked off by a stray sniper in Italy, a few feet from Marshall. We riddled the sniper, but the boy died anyway. I swear to God I saw tears on the old man's face. He wrote the parents himself.

Evans was like a rag doll staring at nothing, and I shoved him into a heap on the seat. I checked my rifle and hunched down. Polk was the most vulnerable, although God knows we were all easy targets. He didn't seem to be too worried; he was whistling between his teeth—a Georgia Cracker without a care in the world. I should move to Georgia.

He jammed the jeep in gear and we crept back as far as we could—enough to get a good running start. Then he gunned it and we were off around the curve, aiming towards one end of the tree.

As we raced towards it I knew we were going to die. We didn't have a prayer; they couldn't miss us. Panic clogged up my throat. I wanted to scream and scream and scream. I wanted a drink of water desperately. I remembered all the blue lakes in Michigan and I wanted to be at the bottom where everything was green and clear. There was no time, we were suspended forever between the road block and the curve. I would never see Nancy again, dimpled and soft in her nightgown, or carry Billy on my shoulder. Whatever was me would die now, on this dusty road, and no one would ever know—except that I wouldn't come back. It wasn't fair! I didn't want to die!

Suddenly everything blurred. All I could see was the barricade and I didn't care. I almost laughed—or was I laughing already? I was wet all over. The jeep was the only roar in a tremendous silence.

Then—and I swear I didn't believe it—out of the brush came a yell all the way from Texas.

"Hold 'er Nute, she's a-headin' fer the barn!"

We swerved towards the side and crunched to a stop in the middle of the branches. Dust sifting into our noses and mouths, leaves in our eyes, twigs scratching our necks, we were in Heaven and these men were angels! Americans! Detailed for rear guard. Holy God, I'll always believe in miracles!

The jeep inched through stubbornly; branches and dust surrounded us. Evans was unconscious, Polk was still whistling, and Marshall was peering through the dirty windshield. I was thirsty.

Finally we broke through to the other side. I don't know how the others felt, but I had just been welcomed back to life. When I got home I'd buy Nancy a fur coat and Billy a Red Ryder BB Gun—for shooting at tin cans. I swore I'd fix the rattle in the Ford—yeah, and trim the honeysuckle ledge by the driveway. I might even got to church with Nancy, instead of sleeping on Sunday morning. Americans were wonderful. I was never one of those "oh say can you see" with-tears-in-my-eyes type, but right then I felt like a hell of a good patriot.

A tall sergeant ambled over and saluted casually. "Uh, Gen'ral, I'm real sorry we waited s'long to yell, but we weren't right sure you were ours 'til you got close. Say," he added as an afterthought, "are y'all okay? The Major there looks like he's been hurt."

"No, he'll be all right. But perhaps we might rest here for a short time."

"Why, sure." Make yourself to home." the sergeant offered graciously.

We climbed out like puppets. I hauled Evans over the side and dragged him to the edge of the road. He was beginning to twitch and whimper so I figured he'd live. I drank some water, lit a cigarette, and sat down. It was good to be alive. I could feel the heat again, pressing in on me, and a fly was crawling up the back of my neck. I flicked him off—the first time in my life I hadn't wanted to kill an insect.

We didn't stay long. Marshall wanted to get where we wre going. Evans was incoherent, but conscious. I dumped some water on him and pushed him back into the jeep. In a few weeks he'd be in an office behind the lines—unfit for combat. Maybe he was lucky.

Now we're in Germany. It's not as peaceful as southern France—the road blocks are bigger and the men behind them aren't friendly. But I guess that's war—just one big experience.

PATRICIA RUSSELL

Unicorn, Chameleon,
Caught in flowers, eating air;
What stories do you tell
To ease the death of kings?
Little man, frightened man
One sharp bomb-horn
Living in fire.

AN ANSWER

"TYPICAL SUNDAY," Dr. Collett muttered to the dog asleep on the floor. "You, dear doggy, may have my fried chicken."

"It's not chicken, it's turkey and the dog has had his lunch." Mrs. Collett was standing in the doorway imitating his forced smile and ingratiating tone. Robert Collett smiled and for lack of something better to say asked if dinner was ready. "That's what I've been calling to you for five minutes." She frowned. "Are you so upset you can't hear?"

He patted her shoulder and nodded sadly, "Pretty worried," then forcing himself to be cheerful said, "But that doesn't keep me from enjoying a good meal."

Mrs. Collett walked before her husband through the doorway into the dining room. David was waiting behind his mother's chair. He wore a dark blue suit and a brown shirt. The absurdity of the combination, even on a small boy of six, made her smile, then she silently reprimanded herself for not being more observant of her child's clothes. The boy seated his mother with the usual amount of flourish small boys affect when given a chance to display their manners, then scurried to his own chair and stuck his napkin under his chin.

"David." Mrs. Collett nodded to her son, indicating that he was to say grace.

He bowed his head. "Bless, Oh Lord, this food to our use and our lives to Thy loving and faithful service. For Christ's sake. Amen."

"Amen."

"Amen."

"Amen."

"I don't want any peas." David had spoken before he raised his head.

"You're having peas," snapped Mrs. Collett. "Dorigene!" She turned to see her daughter dumping salt over her left shoulder. "Don't throw salt on the floor!"

"It's for luck," said the small girl. "I spilled some."

"I don't want you paying any attention to those silly superstitions," the mother lectured.

"Please," Dr. Collett interrupted, "Please, it *is* Sunday." The mother as well as the children, took his words seriously and stopped their chatter. For it was not only as their husband and father that he spoke, but as their pastor.

"Robert, I heard several nice compliments on the sermon this morning." Mrs. Collett said slowly and softly.

Dr. Collett was carving the turkey and didn't reply. Mrs. Collett stared at him intently trying to decide if he had purposely ignored the statement or didn't hear her. "I do hope David and Dorigene don't say anything," she thought.

"Daddy, Bobby Kendall says you don't like the schools. Does that mean I don't have to go any more?" David asked.

Barbara Collett cringed and looked at her husband, but he paid no attention to the question, concentrating on slicing some meat to put on Dorigene's plate.

David persisted. "I mean, is it true?"

Dr. Collett lay his knife on the plate and cleared his throat. "David, Dorigene," he began, "There's something I must tell you. Your father is very greatly out of favor in Lancaster at the moment. You see, there were plans made to take some of the colored children out of their own school and put them in yours. Well, I don't think this would be such a good idea—for various reasons which I won't explain now. I said something about it last Sunday and, though I was asked by the Church Committee, of which your friend Bobby Kendall's father is the chairman, to change my mind, I decided what I had originally said was best . . ."

"You want two schools?" interrupted David.

"Yes." He looked at his wife who was sitting at the opposite end of the table, but she merely shrugged her shoulders. Though she was fully aware of the seriousness of what he said, she was amused at the pulpit manner he retained when speaking to the children. "Maybe it's because he's nervous," she mused.

"Oh." The children's smiles showed that they were completely satisfied with his explanation and felt it was necessary to say no more.

But the elder Collett was not stopping the discussion. "We may even have to leave Lancaster and go to some other town where I'd have another church. But you mustn't listen to what other people say. You should defend . . ."

"No!" gasped Mrs. Collett. "I'll not have them taking sides. They're too young to know or understand what you're talking about."

Dr. Collett rose slowly from his chair and left the table. He walked out into the hall and into the living room. He had left partly because he didn't want to hear his wife oppose him and partly because he knew she was right. The children shouldn't be brought into this matter.

From the living room, he could hear David ask, "What's wrong with Daddy?"

"He's upset. Eat your dinner." Mrs. Collett continued eating, though she had not much appetite. She knew if she left, the children would not finish their meal.

"Drink your milk too," she commanded them. "Milk has calcium . . . for bones," she thought. Laughing at herself, she dreamed of the end of the world and a mother shouting to her dying child, "Drink your milk." She looked about the room as a person who is regaining consciousness. "The end of the world," she thought, "the end of Lancaster, of me and Robert. So you have to drink milk."

"What's for dessert?" asked Dorigene when she had finished.

"You two may get popsicles out of the freezer, then go outside and play." She had decided to save the freshly baked pecan pie for the next day.

David jumped up and left through the kitchen door, muttering "'scuse me." Dorigene had folded her napkin, tucked it under her plate and followed him.

Mrs. Collett took the dishes from the table and carried them into the kitchen. As she passed the door, she saw her husband sitting dejectedly on a straight-backed

chair in the living room. "Robert," she pleaded. "Please come and finish your dinner. It's still fairly warm."

When she came through the swinging kitchen door again, he was in his place, eating. She looked at him, thanking him silently for letting her take care of him. Her offering him sympathy, she knew was no real aid, but it was all she could do. He looked up at her and said, "I'd tell you that you are a good cook, but you're conceited as it is." Then proving his point, he jammed a large mouthful of oyster dressing into his mouth.

"Darling," Mrs. Collett pulled a chair toward the end of the table where he was sitting. "Let's talk about this. This is the first time since we've been married that we haven't been able to discuss our problems. Now comes the biggest problem of all and you clam up."

"Barbara, you know as much as I do about it. You were there last Sunday and I told you what the Church Committee said.

"They are right, too. It's an unwritten law — no politics in the pulpit. I shouldn't have said it, not in the church anyway. But I couldn't—and I still can't—retract the statement. What I said I believed and," he paused, breathing heavily. "I still believe it."

"That's not what I mean. Robert, I don't understand, not really, why you said what you did."

"That's just it, even you, my own wife can't understand why I feel this way. I've spent my life learning how to express myself on the subject of theology, but somehow I can't explain this. He stiffened and cleared his throat. "It's made more difficult by the hostile resistance to . . ."

"You mean the North, don't you? Now we hear the usual bumkum about 'Richmond, capital of the Confederacy, the South shall rise again.' That old southern upbringing of yours is no excuse."

Robert Collett sat thinking. "You see, if I were completely firm in my belief—one way or the other, for or against segregation—I wouldn't hesitate. You're right, and I can't sort some parts of my "old southern upbringing" out of my thoughts. It's hard to get away from. From one's, well . . . one's conditioning. I never said that the schools should be segregated—in Lancaster, or any other place.. What I said and what I'm sure of is that God has made different races, people with different skin colors, because he wanted to distinguish them. It may be my rebel indoctrination, but my Southern upbringing is just as much an integral part of me as your . . . well . . . your Lancaster upbringing. That's the whole problem, Barbara, it's like trying to be . . . to be," he repeated, "what I'm not. If I could only be sure. If I—if anybody could only be sure—of the answer to the question of race."

"But Robert, this decision doesn't concern just us, just you and I and the children. It's a matter of principle, something awfully big."

"You mean do I realize the gravity of the situation? Yes, I do. I realize it more than you could imagine. If it were just a question of my saying 'I will—or will not—retract the statement,' I could have given Mr. Kendall and the committee an answer last week. But I am not sure, even now what my answer will be, or should be."

"Then is that where your Southern learning comes in? If you're not really sure one way or another, you lean toward what you were taught in the beginning."

"Exactly. I think you understand what I'm trying to say."

"But somehow," she stood as she spoke, "it isn't right. It's like saying, 'Little children come unto me, if you're white.' It doesn't seem to be morally right to differentiate on the basis of skin color." "God must give some reason for having different races." Robert put his head down and muttered, "I don't know, I don't know."

His wife knew that she had carried the conversation too far. She shoved in her chair. "Do you want some pie?"

"No thanks."

"I'll get some coffee," she said, taking his plate to the kitchen.

She returned with some coffee and sat down. They sat there, neither saying a word. Barbara looked down at the table and murmured, "This table . . ." They were both looking at the dining room table, its smooth mahogany finish covered by the white linen cloth, and thinking about the day it arrived. It was only three days after they were married, and it was a wedding present from the congregation.

"O," Mrs. Collett said abruptly, "It's almost two and I ought to get these things cleaned up before Mr. Kendall comes." She paused and lowered her voice. "Robert, whatever happens, it's all right with me—however you decide."

"You know he's going to ask for my resignation, don't you?" he asked.

"Yes, but I can count on you to do what's right." She picked up the remainder of the dishes and went into the kitchen.

"What's right," thought Dr. Collett, "as if I knew what is right!" He placed his arms on the table and laid his head down and prayed. "O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly; grant me, in all my doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what Thou wouldst have me do, that Thy spirit may save me from false choice and in Thy light I may see light and in Thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

PATRICIA RUSSELL

Minuet



Harlequin and Columbine
Danced on a gold-light stage,
(What a world was there, my friend!)
While I sat, small and dark,
In a nailed-down seat,
Unable to join
In the light or the dance.

KATRINA GROAT

The Assembly Line



MR. SCHMIDT had been a watch-maker in the Old Country, but now he had a new job — making a certain bolt for a part of the axle that belonged on the front end of the Haskins 28 — the finest, newest car that Haskins Motors made. The job was really very simple. Mr. Schmidt had a place in the assembly line, and he sat there, making his bolts exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter.

On the first day Mr. Schmidt was five minutes early to work, and full of zeal. He was determined to make the finest bolts possible; in fact, the really perfect bolt. "Only perfection is worthy of my efforts," said Mr. Schmidt, "whether I am making cog-wheels for watches, or bolts for automobile axles." And he meant it.

For Mr. Schmidt had a literal mind. He always meant what he said, and said what he meant; and furthermore, he took all statements at face value. So when he was told to make his bolts exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter, he realized that this did not mean 1.069 millimeters, or 1.071 millimeters, but exactly 1.070 millimeters, and his security of mind depended on this exactitude.

The whistle blew for the 8 o'clock shift, and Mr. Schmidt took his place. The rough pieces of steel were before him — he had only to smooth them to the right dimensions. A number of measuring instruments were there to help him, and there was a little machine for grinding. He picked up a bolt and started in. After ten minutes, or so, the bolt was exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter, so he put it on a moving belt that traveled away to the left, and started on another. By the time he had finished three or four of them, he felt that he was doing very well, and had acquired some precision.

As he finished the sixth bolt he became aware of some commotion around him. People were shouting, and someone was standing over him. It was Mr.

MacCallum, the foreman, and he seemed somewhat annoyed. "Now look here, Schmidt," said MacCallum, "just what do you think you're trying to prove? You've made exactly six bolts in the last hour, when ya should have done fifty, and on top of that, they're all too small. Now just *what* are you trying to prove? Do you want to get fired your first day on the job? Huh?

At first Mr. Schmidt was flabbergasted. Then he was annoyed. "It may be true that I have been slow," he said, "but my bolts are *certainly* not too small! They are exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter, just as I was instructed to make them. I will demonstrate this to you." And he got out his measuring instruments and showed that the bolts were perfectly true in size.

"Well," said MacCallum, "they sure don't fit the holes, and Jack Murphy has been drilling those holes for eight years now. He ought to know how to do it by this time!"

"Then he's been doing it wrong for eight years," said Mr. Schmidt, "because *my* bolts are perfect — as you have seen yourself."

"Now look here, Schmidt, I don't want to have any trouble from you. You make them bolts to fit the holes, or out you go. D'ya hear?"

"That seems silly to me," said Mr. Schmidt. "The holes ought to fit the bolts, not the other way around. And after all, my bolts *are* the right size. They're good quality. And those holes certainly are *not*!"

"All right, Schmidt, I've had enough out of you. You just pick up and leave before I wring your scrawny little—"

"Now, now, what is this all about?" The jolly booming voice of Mr. Samuel Haskins suddenly broke in. "What is this little dispute about?"

"Well sir," said MacCallum, "this is a new man, called Schmidt. He's supposed to be making bolts for the front axle. But he's too slow, and his bolts don't even fit!"

"Pardon me, sir," said Mr. Schmidt, "but I, too, have something to say. My bolts are exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter, as the plans call for. It is the holes for these bolts that are not correct. Allow me to prove this to you."

The demonstration was gone through again, and it was quite true. The bolts were exactly right.

"Dear me, this will never do," said Mr. Haskins. "Do you mean to tell me that these holes have been drilled incorrectly for eight years now?"

"Obviously the bolts were wrong too," said Mr. Schmidt.

"Yes, yes, of course," said Mr. Haskins. "We must remedy this at once. Why Haskins Motors has always been known for its high quality cars!"

Jack Murphy was not at all pleased when he had to change his drilling methods. The habits of eight years are hard to get rid of, and poor Jack was not precise by nature. But with some effort he was able to do it right, although, of course, it took much longer than the old way. And so, there was peace again. Or as much peace as can be found in an automobile factory.

But not for long. Will Richards made another part that had to fit into the other end of the hole that Jack Murphy drilled for Mr. Schmidt's bolt. And now that Jack had made his hole the correct size, Will's part didn't fit. Will Richards was several inches over six feet tall, and had red hair, so his opinions were pretty generally listened to, and on that day he had a tooth-ache. So he was in no mood for any kind of nonsense. He grabbed Jack by the collar and shook him.

"All right Murphy," he said. "Put your mind (if you have any) on your work and do it *right*! These holes are so small that my parts don't fit in at all! What the hell do you think you're doing, anyway?"

"Now just calm down, Will, please," said Jack. "I'm only doing what I was told to do. This new fellow, Schmidt, has been making bolts that are *exactly* 1.07 millimeters in diameter, and I have to make my holes to fit his bolts — not the other way around. If your parts don't fit it's not *my* fault. Why don't you try making them the right size?"

"All right, Funny Boy," said Will. "You asked for it!"

"Now, now," said Mr. Haskins. "What is this little dispute about?"

"This wise guy is drilling his holes so small, I can't make my part fit, Mr. Haskins."

"But it's not *my* fault," said Jack. "I have to make the holes smaller to fit Schmidt's bolts, which are exactly 1.07 millimeters."

"That's right, Murphy," said Mr. Haskins. "Will, you'll just have to make your work conform. We can't change everything for you." And he went back to his office. Will started to protest, but then thought better of it and went back to work. He made the shaft of his part exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter.

Mr. Schmidt was enjoying his job, now that the first little difficulties were over. He had always enjoyed precision work, and this was not too difficult, but exacting enough to challenge him. He speeded his production up to ten in one hour, and finally to twelve, and felt quite proud of what he had done. He polished each bolt lovingly and oiled it before putting it on the moving belt. They were certainly the most perfect bolts in the world.

But farther along the line things were not all well. Fred Adler made a clip which fitted over the shaft of the part that Will Richards made to go in the other end of the hole that Jack Murphy drilled to fit the bolt that Mr. Schmidt had filed down to exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter. Fred was a little bit scared of Will Richards, and hesitated to criticize his work, but there was nothing else to do. The shaft was much too small, and it would be impossible to make the axle fit onto the chassis, if something wasn't done to remedy this. So he nervously bit his fingernails, pushed his glasses up, and sidled over to Will's place.

"Excuse me, Will," he said, "but I have a little something to bring to your attention. This shaft of yours is too small, and my clip doesn't fit it any more."

"So what? So the size of my shaft is correct now. You can check by the plans. You just make your clip the right size and you'll be all right. So go on. Get lost!"

Fred went back to his place. He measured Will's part and found that it was correct to about .0000. He began to work again, and this time he was careful to measure accurately. It took a long time to make each clip, but then, the other parts weren't coming in very fast either. He had carefully smoothed his second clip, when MacCallum materialized at his elbow.

"Just what are you doing with that goofy grin on your face? You haven't gotten any work done at all this morning! This place is going to pieces. Now get busy or you'll be thrown outta here so fast you won't know what happened!"

"But Mac—"

"Shut up or get out!"

Just then Phil Hammond, who made a part that was to be attached to Fred's clip, came running up from his place. "Hey, Fred! What's going on around here? This clip is too small!"

"Well," said Fred, "Will told me—"

But enough of this. It must be clear what happened next. Each person had to pay more attention to what he was doing, and it took longer to make each part. The assembly line slowed almost to a halt. Production costs mounted. But surprisingly enough no money was lost. The name of the car was changed to the Haskins 29, and it soon bettered the Rolls-Royce in quality. In fact it was so special that it was only made by private contract and no price was listed for it. Mr. Haskins is very proud of that car.

Mr. Schmidt still makes bolts for the front axle. "I take pride in my work," he says. "My bolts are all perfect. They are exactly 1.07 millimeters in diameter."

SUZY SHIMEK



this is the silent wind-hour
evening moves to the line of sky
drowning in softened gold.
darkness imprints darkness.
time, nothing lives except in hushes,
nothing breathes except in masked breaths,
sighs like spinning web
or skipping flat rocks across a river.

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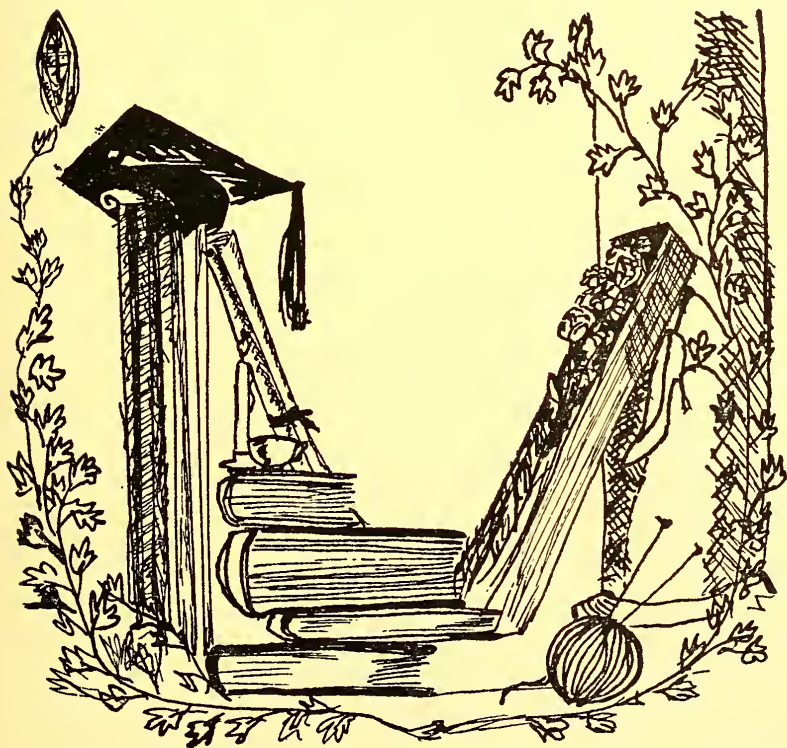
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FIVE IN ONE

"THERE are a lot of people who don't like you." Larry said, leaning forward across the kitchen table.

"That's always nice to know." I answered, and reached for my cooling cup of coffee. I noticed that my sapphire ring sparkled in the kitchen light.

"It's really sort of a compliment. It means that you have a definite personality that people feel obligated to judge. They can't just take you or leave you. That's good."

"I suppose, everything is relative. Anyway, there's nothing like having a definite personality." I tried to laugh, but it sounded weak and unconvincing.

"You've always interested me," Larry said. "You're good looking and have a good mind. Don't throw all your potential away because you're afraid to assert yourself. Tell people what you think of them, even if it's 'Go to hell!' Bet that's the reason we don't get along better. Maybe we're not frank enough. What do you think?" He looked at me sadly, then added self-consciously, "I've always suspected it was your mother. She doesn't like me. Never has, has she?"

"Don't be ridiculous. Mama likes everyone." I looked him straight in the face, trying to sound persuasive.

"O.k., o.k., but you ought to revolt from her. Live your own life. Your mother is always selling you. You can sell yourself. Revolt." He commanded, raising his drink towards me as a salute.

I smiled and nodded as if I were going to follow his orders. I didn't feel like revolting. I had lost my appetite, and let my fork play with the steaming spaghetti on my plate.

Larry drank his salute to me and continued, "I remember when you first moved here. I liked you, but we just couldn't seem to make contact. Your mother was the reason, I'm sure."

"Now, who do you know that 'made contact' in the seventh grade? And leave mother out of this, she didn't even know you were alive." We both laughed, and Larry patted me on the hand.

"Poor Mama had enough to do adjusting to me going to my first dances. I never will forget all you boys sitting on one side of the ballroom with your hands in your pockets, while we sat on the other side, giggling and pretending not to see you." Larry smiled and made a mock bow.

"You were the only one who dared cross 'The Great Divide.' I always thought it was so funny how you told us that we looked pretty and wore sophisticated clothes. It made me feel nice, but imagine any of us being sophisticated as flat chested seventh graders."

"But, as you said yourself, 'everything is relative'." Larry answered.

I looked at his eyes. They were watery and dim from too much scotch. I picked up my fork again and pretended to eat. I wondered why Larry had never been a real success. "Of course," I thought, "he does have red hair and wears glasses, but he can't help that. He isn't a bad looking boy; he wears the right tweeds and button down shirts. I'm not sure what it is." I remembered going to a dinner party with him one night. It was on a Friday, and the hostess served steak which Larry refused to eat because he said Catholics only ate fish on Friday. He isn't a Catholic, so I don't see why it bothered him, but Larry's like that.

I don't think his four years at St. Thomas' were very happy ones. He told me that he and his roommate would take his transistor radio and a pack of cigarettes into the woods every Sunday. They listened to jazz, talked and saw who could smoke the most cigarettes first.

Larry asked me up to St. Tom Finals, and then I went with Bill Tucker. Larry wrote me a letter, telling me very proudly that he'd gotten another date who was a combination of Grace Kelley and Suzy Parker. She was too. Her name was Brenda Scheer and she was from Richmond, Virginia. Brenda turned out to be like honey and the St. Tom boys like bees after a winter's hibernation. Larry didn't get to dance with her all night, which probably suited Brenda. Larry never invited her anywhere again, but he never dates the same girl twice anyway.

That weekend Larry graduated from St. Thomas' receiving a French award and a full scholarship to Harvard. Mr. Ambler was thrilled. Every time I came into his store, for a month after graduation, he'd hit me on the back, like he always does, wink and say, "What a son I've got. Certainly am proud of him. I never thought old Harry Ambler would be having a son going to Harvard. Where are you going to school now, little lady?" Mr. Ambler has an Arthur Godfrey face, and his shirts always look too tight for him around the neck.

Larry has just never quite made it around here. I could have shot myself our first Christmas home from college. I saw Larry at a dance, and before I had thought I had said, "Why, Larry, you're just the same!" "Well, what did you expect?" he asked. I don't know what I had expected, but college had made no changes on Larry.

My thoughts had made me feel self-conscious, so I reached for my coffee cup as a rescue. The coffee was cold now. I put the cup back on the saucer, and looked at Larry. He had stopped eating and was staring at his hands in front of him. He had short, manicured fingers that were blonde and freckled. Suddenly he balled one hand into a fist, and hit it hard into the palm of his other hand.

Neither of us said a word. We sat dumbly looking at each other, until my attention was distracted by the plunking of the faucet drops. Larry's eyes followed mine, and we both watched the bubbles stretch themselves out of the spigot and finally fall into the sink. "Drip, drip, drip." They made a monotonous rhythm

that seemed to be repeating, "Free, free, free," as the drops escaped down the drain.

"How would you like to be one of those drops?" I asked.

"I'd love it!" Larry answered seriously.

"O, now don't be melodramatic. You know that you wouldn't like to live in a drain pipe the rest of your life."

"Why not? That's what I'm living in now. "He hit his fist into his hand again. Then he let loose. "My parents are driving me crazy. They've been driving me crazy for years. Mother's always after me, 'Why don't you get a date tonight, La-rry?' or, 'That was a sweet little girl you had a date with last night. Would you like me to have her around for dinner?' Did it ever occur to her that I just might not want a girl?" He looked up and shook his head. "When she and Dad finally heckle me into calling some girl, that's the worst part. As soon as I pick up the phone my stupied stomach starts to turn over. Then I get her on the phone, like you today, and try to make some casual conversation. When I run out of that, I ask her for a date, and she probably says no, like you. Then I feel like a damn fool. A damn fool. That's how I felt today."

"Larry, I'm sorry about that." I was too, but I never sound convincing at this sort of thing. "I've had this other date for a long time. You should have told me to forget the cocktail party. That's what I deserved."

"You're right, I should have." He agreed. "Imagine how great I felt when you said you had to go home after the party because you had another date." He smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "I'm glad I could kidnap you for another hour anyway."

I looked at the kitchen clock. It said eight-thirty, and I knew my date was sitting at home right now; but the scotch had loosened Larry's tongue and I couldn't leave yet.

He raised his head and smiled. Then he stared past me and said, "My parents have always liked you. Too bad, huh?" He laughed loudly, just for a second. It cut the silence of the room and startled me.

"Maybe you've exaggerated your parents' influence."

"Maybe!" He mocked. "That's what that idiot Harvard psychiatrist told me too. But neither of you know what it's like. My mother was one of five children. She wanted to have five children too, but she couldn't." He picked up his drink and took a long swallow. I wished he hadn't told me that about his mother.

"So *I'm* all five children in one. Everything I do has to be perfect. I thought everything would be great when I got to Harvard. Big Northern College. What a joke! Those damn boys up there, just a bunch of narrow minded preppies. If you don't buy your clothes at Brooks Brothers or J. Press, you'd better forget about joining a club. Talk about discrimination. You wouldn't believe the hell boys have to go through. Lucky me to have a plain old American name like Ambler." He leaned forward across the table and narrowed his eyes. "I'm just glad my name doesn't end with a "stein" or a "ski." I'm lucky because Banner is a damn good club, good boys, good parties. Glad I know where to buy my clothes." He laughed again, but now for a long time. He shook all over, and

when he stopped, tears stood in his eyes. He finished his drink and reached for the bottle.

"I'm sorry to hear about all that prejudice. They talk about the South. At least getting away from home seems to have been a wise decision."

"Yes, I guess so. The pressures are always worst when I come home. I hate this town. Nobody thinks. You're still tagged with your high school nick names and nobody gives you any credit for college changes. My lord! I'm not the same person I was in the ninth grade!" he said defiantly and drank the scotch straight.

"I know, I've felt that way too, but it's all a big game that you have to go along with or you'd be completely lost. I guess that's why people always feel they have to move away from their home town for a few years before they can settle down there. I guess it's a lot easier for some people to adjust to all this pretense than others. Don't worry about it."

"Sure. Sure." He smiled, dismissing the subject. I looked at the clock: nine o'clock. I was an hour late.

"Larry, I'm sorry, but I'm an hour late. I think I'd better go now."

He looked at me without saying a word. Then he stood up and said, "Let's go."

Mrs. Ambler walked in then and said, "O, are you leaving so early?"

"I'm afraid I have to, Mrs. Ambler. I enjoyed the dinner so much. Thank you for having me."

"Glad you came. Larry, will you put out the dog when you leave?"

"No!" He called over his shoulder. He threw his empty glass at the water spigot shattering the glass and the bubbles. "I guess there are a lot of people who don't like me, too," he said under his breath. He opened the door and said, "Let's go."

SUSAN RUSMISEL

Today the Breeze

TODAY the breeze

That had been lazing in the sun

Found that shadow had crept coolly close,

And sleepily rousing to retrieve bright warmth,

Left in passing, by my idle hand

A tiny locust's sere but perfect ghost.

Death gently smiled.



THE MINE FIELD

“YEAH, we’ll have to do it,” said Joe. “Like pigs in the slaughter house, skinny pigs, no meat on our bones, ain’t worth the powder.” “Ah, shut up!” someone said from behind, and “keep moving.” “Keep moving, keep moving,” it thumped in my head. In between the cussing and the grumbling that’s all I’d been hearing for days, or was it months, maybe even years, I didn’t know. Time wasn’t anymore. The ticking of clocks had turned into the tramping of feet, and time stumbled every time two feet stopped working. A great machine, that’s what we were, a clock made out of blood and bones. We’d be coming to the line soon, and then it would be luck. How many of us would be blown up? It was luck, there’s nothing but luck in a mine field. I looked down at my arm. It didn’t seem to really be a part of me, and I tried to imagine what it would look

like all torn apart. Luck, what a screwy word! It really didn't mean anything, so much rice and pudding. A while back I might have thought about God, but it only made me hurt all over when I thought about God now, like an itch somewhere that you can't scratch. We were on the sand now. My legs felt heavy. I must have been biting the inside of my mouth, because I could taste blood. I could smell blood too. It was like walking on a mattress, the big boots dug into the sand with each step. Yeah, a mattress. It would soon be an eternal bed where most of our machine would lie broken. I could smell the salt now, it was almost as if I could feel the grains of salt and sand between my teeth. I'd smelled it before, my feet were bare then and my body free, running across the sand in the afternoon, the sand, warm and the air, light, but there was laughter then, before the world split. That was summer, and the last summer. There was never another one.

"Keep moving" hammered again from behind. The air was thick with smoke, and fog sat on our hands and faces. I looked around at the men. In the dark all you could see were teeth, clenched. Mouths, that's all you could see, that's all we were, but dumb mouths. Nothing to say, because nothing we could say would change things. Couldn't even dream anymore. There was no one here to tell us that everything would turn out all right. That was the summer I cut my toe on a shell. She cried when she saw it. She touched it when she wrapped her handkerchief around it. It seemed funny, her touching my bloody, sandy foot, it made me love her more. I was glad that she would never see anything like this. Yes, I was glad, I told myself, really I was.

I had to think, I had to think. Maybe I'd never think again, but this wasn't the end of the line, it couldn't be. I remember reading about good and evil, of right and wrong, but then it didn't mean anything. Evil, we never used to think of evil. On a Sunday afternoon on the beach you don't have to think about evil.

She smelled like the sea. Her mood was like the sea too, during the day all fast and alive, at night, quiet and gentle, her breath a whisper. We were coming closer to the line now. I'd once asked how you could tell when you had crossed the line. "You'll know all right" he told me, and his eyes looked like death.

It was getting light now, and I could see the sand and the rocks sticking their heads up from underneath the sand. Let me see, if I don't step on a rock, maybe I'll make it through. Yes, that's it, walk in between, step on a crack break your mother's back, walk in between, follow the dotted line.

"Few more yards to go," someone said. A few more yards, a few more thoughts, and then I'd be too scared to think. Be a man. "You are a man," she'd said, "that's why I love you." A man, what is a man . . . a little God? No, more like an animal crawling on his belly to get somewhere that ends nowhere. My legs were feeling heavier, but they wouldn't stop moving. It was like knowing before hand that you are going to hit the wrong key on the piano, but you still hit it. This wasn't the plan. She looked up at me and she said, "You'll do something very special someday. I know you will."

The sea, I smelled the sea again. Would I smell it another time, somewhere else? There was sea enough for all of us, yet we still had to fight for it, and if there was only one dirty puddle we'd still fight for it. Will man ever be satisfied? Does it matter . . . does it matter? Smoke stung my eyes again and noise filled my mind. From somewhere I heard a voice cry: "Keep moving!"

ELIZABETH MEADE

IN and OUT at Sweet Briar

PLAYING Lawrence Welk and Harry Belafonte records is OUT, but knowing the Kingston Trio by their first names and playing Bach on a recorder are IN.



French is OUT, especially understanding French movies without subtitles.

These will never be back in:

Circle pins

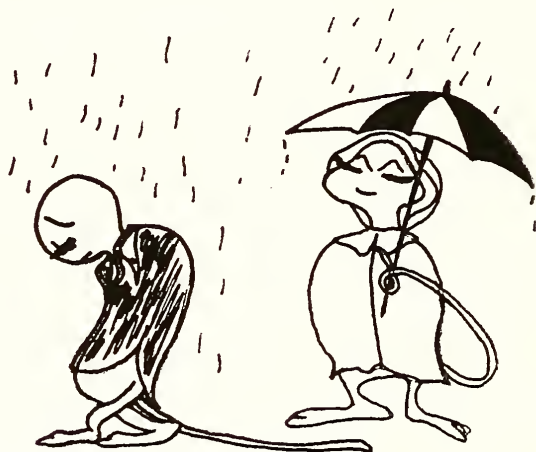
Crinolines

Madras dresses, skirts, hats, blouses

Charm bracelets

Initials are WAY OUT

Brooks Brothers was OUT, but it was so far Out, that now it's back In for good, and it's all right to buy their shirts and raincoats again. (However, non-Brooks Brothers hooded rain coats are very IN.)



Wearing loafers without socks is IN, but having pennies in them is OUT.
Red and black leotards are OUT; olive green ones are IN.

Knitting a sweater for a boy is OUT: knitting one for yourself is IN.

Owning a foreign car, particularly a Volkswagen, is OUT, but having a small American car is IN.

Wearing a sari in the rain is IN.



Studying abroad is IN, only if it's in Yugoslavia.

Saying that you don't agree with American foreign policy is IN; but understanding American foreign policy is OUT.

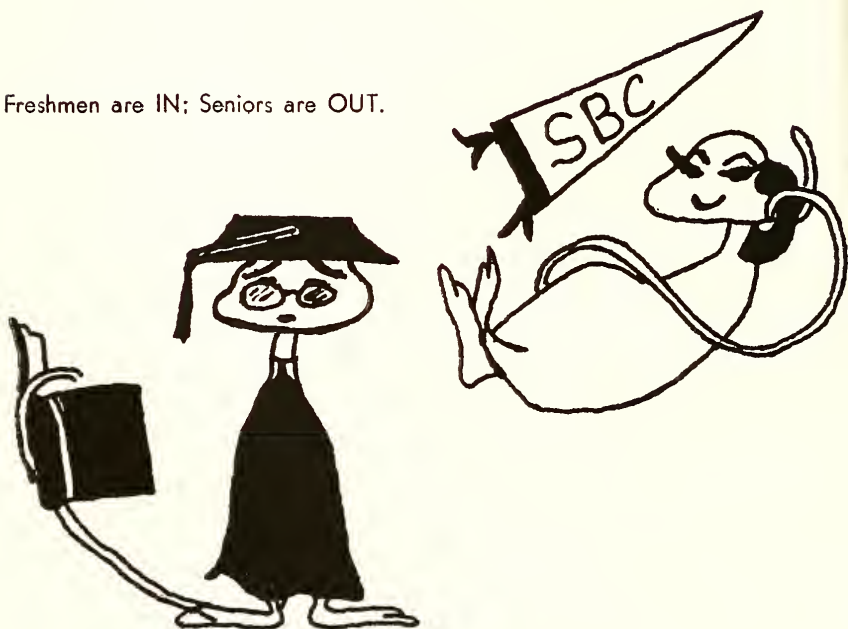


Walking barefooted is IN, except with a 5' 3" date.

T.V. is OUT so far that it needs radio to get it back IN.

Talk in the morning will never be IN, but drinking Russian tea at midnight and talking about South Africans is IN.

Freshmen are IN; Seniors are OUT.



The Beat Generation is out, but writing poetry on old copies of *The Villager* IS IN.

Being IN is OUT.

Geoffrey Chaucer

GEOFFREY, what do you suppose
Life is made for, joys or woes?
Loving thoughts or hateful schemes?
Dreams-come-true or shattered dreams?
Honored word or broken oath—
One of these, or parts of both?

Geoffrey answered not a word,
Nor did it seem he even heard,
But when he took up his pen
He gave an answer to all men.

Joy and sorrow are extremes
Brought about by mankind's dreams.
All too often joy is seeming;
Sorrow wakes us from our dreaming.
But extremes all have a mean—
Here Humor is the go-between.
Joy plus sorrow equals life,
But this must be more than strife
And Humor is the catalyst!
It's the sun that burns off mist.
It's the light that shines through smog
And the breeze that blows out fog.
Humor makes a gift of giving—
Humor makes life worth the living!

Geoffrey dipped his pen in wit
And living people came from it—
So real that we, six centuries after
They were drawn, can hear their laughter,
And the reader, too, is merry
On that road to Canterbury!

THE SEA-MUSE

I WAS losing sleep over some term papers last semester and had got myself into a horrible mess. I was most grateful when Lord Nelson's ghost came, kindly and quietly, to help me out.

"By gad," he said to me, "why don't you write something different for the BRAMBLER? I know everyone must be heartily sick sick sick of those young-collegiate-modernistic poems and an-adult-looks-at-childhood essays." He paced the floor a moment, as he always does, then turned and faced me. "But, then, I suppose stream of consciousness and agnosticism are interesting in their own way. I trust it shall never be said of me that I scorned the literary attempts of the youth of America—or of Great Britain, too, for that matter." He was embarrassed that he had said so much, and was quite afraid that he might have sounded old-fashioned. He grinned rather weakly, but I took it as encouragement. "I say, child; why don't you write a sonnet . . . or what you like . . . and—uh—send it in?"

"Oh, sir," I said to the Specter, (he dislikes being called a ghost), "One can't just sit down and write an essay that will be accepted for publication. Besides, I can't write."

"Nonsense," he said. "What is the purpose for your being in college? What have you learned during all your years of education, if not how to write English Prose?"

"I write *Parodies*."

"Well, write one. After all, if it's English Prose, it cannot possibly fail."

"You're an Anglo-maniac, sir," I said, sitting down at my typewriter.

"Anglophile," he corrected.

. . . If the Specter wants to see parody he will doubtless be confronted with something like this:

I am young. In the morning I hear the sound—boom—of the radiators going ping—snort—wheeze against the soft shell of my ear. I arise and am astonished. It is cold, and cliches do not seem to fit. And today I shall say, "Where is God; where, in this great chaos?" Yet the cliché cometh. Boom. . .

Poetry—ah, Shakespeare, Donne, (the Specter likes Donne), Milton, all my old friends, you cannot write verse like that which I now compose. The Specter would smile and say "By gad, it's excellent—for a parody." Yet I fear he would be shocked, nevertheless . . . I take pen in hand; I am inspired:

Quoth the raven—Nay! Avaunt!
I re-commence, discarding all poetic rhetoric. This, sir is modern abstraction:

Sighs?
Made for you?
Ah,
that I might. . .

Sand
In my shoes
Aha, aha.

There is no reason
Why I must
 f
 a
 l
 l d
 o
 w
 n
The inexorable conclusion
Of our faith
Exists in black, black
 telephone poles
and cold necks.

Tears?
Who wants tears?

The sole, lone grate
Of a phonograph record is
 enough,
 enough,
 "I die, Horatio."

I don't guess the Specter will like this, after all. Things have changed since his day, and old heroes have a hard time in this civilization. Achilles gave up long ago and went home.

BARBARA S. BEURY



BUS, STOP!

BUS sickness is one of my mental disorders, so as I waited on the side of Highway 29 to flag down my bus for the eight hour ride home, I can say the thoughts going through my head were anything but pleasant. When the driver saw me with my three suitcases, tennis racket, riding boots and other paraphernalia I thought I'd need for my week's visit at home, he almost kept going, but decided not to ignore the shy wave of my grubby glove, and stopped. He helped me load myself and my belongings into his torture chamber and I struggled to the rear of the bus successfully hitting some man in the eye with my racket press and only dropping one of the books stuffed under my arm. I sat down beside an elderly lady who looked harmless and a little more inviting than the sailors further back on the left.

When I heard that the trip took eight hours I had well-fortified myself with Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, a few magazines, and two of the college's infamous bag lunches.

It was only 4:30 so I decided instead of starting in on one of the bag lunches I'd try the first chapter of *Catcher*. I'd read only about a page when I realized the old lady was intermittently reading over my shoulder and looking at me with horrified glances that obviously indicated she disapproved of my reading material. I didn't have long to wait before she gathered her courage and breath to begin a dissertation on the evils of the education of women as verified by my sinister enjoyment of *Catcher*. The dialogue went something like this:

OLD LADY: I don't mean to be nosey but, I couldn't help seeing that trash you're reading and thought perhaps if I said something to you now, you might thank me someday for interfering. How old are you? And what are you doing travelling alone?

ME: I'm nineteen and am going home for a school vacation.

I was trying to be polite so maybe she'd leave me alone.

OLD LADY: Well, I'm certain if your parents knew you were reading that kind of trash they try to pawn off as literature these days, they'd be quite shocked. I imagine you go to college around here where they can't keep tabs on you?

ME: Yes ma'm, Northwoods Women's College, but really this book was selected by a book of the month cl—

OLD LADY: Women's College, well, that's what I've always preached about education for women. The modern woman is no different from her mother, or her mother's mother whose place was right in the home having babies and keeping a nice house for her hard-working husband.

I started to tell her to keep her ideas on education to herself and her eyes on something other than my book when I remembered I'd already given away my connection with Northwoods and didn't want any nasty letters written to our President about me.

So I changed my tactics.

ME: Yes ma'm, you're right about a woman's place being in the home, so you see that's why I'm at school, to catch a husband, you know there isn't much of a home without a husband! Ha, ha, ha.

But she wasn't laughing, and she used my last statement as a good opening for Lecture Number II.

OLD LADY: This younger generation, my goodness, marriage is not a laughing matter young lady, and certainly you don't go looking for a husband like you hunt for wild animals. Now when I was young, of course I have never married but I had my offers and. . .

It was too late, I was trapped. There is no use my telling you the rest of this conversation because it's rather one sided with my part of the conversation being limited to only "Yes ma'ms and No ma'ms."

Thank heavens we finally arrived at Litlington, Virginia, my old pedantic friend's destination—and all I can say is looks are often deceiving and if I had the chance to board the bus again I would have ventured back to the representatives of the Norton Navy Yards before having to start my vacation listening to a frustrated old maid give her Anti-Education-For-Women lecture, parts I and II.

In Litlington, home of the Salem-Filmore school for unwed fathers, several girls who were obviously unwanted blind dates were being herded into the bus for their trip back to Mars or what-ever planet their frantic dates thought they came from. The girls were hesitating but the boys were insisting and finally won out by smooth remarks like, "Really, Cornelia, I must spend all day and evening studying for a quiz I just found out I have Monday in Basket weaving class—it just wouldn't be much of a weekend for you with me in the library. Don't make any plans for next weekend though cause I'd really like to date you. Seriously I'll call you Tuesday night—better hurry and get a good seat on the bus now. . ."

I was becoming nauseated. There is nothing I hate worse than a fibber, why didn't he just politely tell her they weren't compatible and to get lost! I could just picture poor Cornelia spending Tuesday evening glued inside the stuffy phone booth waiting for a call that wouldn't come Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or ever.

The bus started and to relieve my nausea I decided it was time to open one of my bag-lunches. As I greedily reached my hand in I instantly realized my mistake as my fingers grasped a squashed deviled egg and a sandwich—tomato and lettuce on a stale hamburger bun. I tried again and this time struck gold—a mystery meat sandwich, a 5c bag of mashed potato chips and two cookies, rice krispy variety.

After I had eaten this banquet I felt even more nauseated and when I saw we were ready to start over the first chain of mountains I decided the best policy of self-cure was a nap. I had been playing "Rip Van" for about twenty minutes when the bus came to a sudden stop which threw me off the seat into the aisle. Just as I was picking myself up from the floor the sailor for whom the bus had stopped crawled over me and sat down in the seat next to mine.

There were plenty of empty seats but he had evidently just seen a few wisps of my blonde hair in the dimness of the reading light that was on, and decided to at least give the situation the ol' Navy try.

Before he could open his mouth I put on my horn-rims and opening *Catcher* again I started reading furiously, hoping he would think me terribly intellectual and any conversation would be futile. I knew my luck wouldn't hold out:

"What'cha reading blondie?"

"A novel."

"Mickey Spilane?"

"No, Salinger, and if you don't mind I'd like to finish it."

"Sure, chick, excuse me, I was only trying to be friendly."

I smiled sarcastically at him, inwardly defining his definition of friendly. Of course he took the smile to mean I had changed my mind and came out with another choice conversation starter.

"Ya work around here?"

"No, I go to school, but seriously I must finish this book."

It was too late, nothing would stop him now, he was determined to talk even if it meant a one-way conversation.

"Well, I went to high school and boy, did I get sick of it, so instead of going to college I thought I'd give ol' Uncle Sam a break and join the Navy. Just eating, sleeping, and a little work now and then, really is the life."

I felt rather sorry for him since he hadn't had the benefit of higher education and was certainly an unintelligent proletarian, so I weakly smiled at him again. As my lips drooped back to normal after my attempted smile I could have easily slugged myself because my brief ray of sunshine was just enough to keep him going.

"I'm going home on a 90 hour leave, got me a girl friend back home that's crazy about me, writes me every day, don't cheat on me either—course what she don't know about me won't hurt her cause I'm not ready to settle down yet"

He accompanied this last sly suggestion that I might have a chance with him, with a wink and a playful knock against my right knee.

This time I didn't smile, but shut my book quietly and pulling my coat around my shoulders calmly got up saying:

"If you'll excuse me please, I'm moving to another seat. Your autobiography was quite interesting but I have to finish my book in quiet meditation."

Then I gave him that ol' monastic look of dedication and he responded with that Navy smile that comes after the battle has been lost.

"Sure chick, don't get all heated, I only wanted some company, sorry I didn't know you were some brain or something."

Everyone on the bus was staring at me by this time, but at that point I didn't care. The seat where I had moved was an empty double one, and since I had it all to myself I decided to try to take that nap I had begun before Pearl Harbor. I stretched out using my coat as a pillow-cover combination, not too attractive or effective but endurable. I must have slept about an hour or so because the next time I woke up was when the driver flipped the overhead lights on for our rest stop.

"Ladies and Gentlemen (probably) this is Coal Dust, Pennsylvania, population 973, the vehicle will remain here about one-half an hour. You will find a fine restaurant straight ahead with clean sanitary rest rooms."

I was hungry after the long, strenuous ride so following the rest of the passengers I entered the restaurant, and headed for that clean, sanitary restroom. Returning, I quickly glanced around the room to see where my friend the sailor was. Finally I saw his scrawny little blue back in a booth, seated across from one of our other lucky female passengers. They were engaged in what looked like a deep stimulating conversation so I stealthily crept up to one of the counter stools near the door and plopped myself down. I ordered coffee and apple pie and soon discovered the appropriateness of the town's name. There was a light covering of black silt in place of a crust on the apples. My hunger seemed to disappear so after drinking my coffee (at least I couldn't see the dust in it) I paid my check and went back to the bus to spend the rest of my "rest period."

I had just shut my eyes to sack out for the remainder of the trip when I heard the clatter of the tiny clodhoppers of my fellow passengers as they re-boarded the bus. The engine turned over and we were off again. This time I recognized new voices across the aisle.

"Well, we're out. Lucky we brought those civvies, those damn school uniforms can be spotted by anyone, and that's all we'd need to be reported for smoking and drinking in public with our uniforms on."

"Yeh, let's open the six-pack now, come on, look, three apiece. Hey, where are the pretzels? Christ! You sat on them!"

"Look, you go ahead and take my two, one will be fine for me, I don't want to meet my parents smelling like I go to school at a brewery. Besides to be honest, I couldn't even find my way off the damn bus if I had all three."

"For Christ sake, I thought you said you'd had something besides a coca-cola to drink before? I thought you said you'd been around. . . ."

"Look, I wasn't lying, I can easily put away two six-packs alone, but damnit I haven't had a thing to eat since lunch and you know about drinking on an empty stomach!"

There was silence except for occasional gurgles from Big Men I and II, as they drank their beer. Then:

"Hey Frank, I don't feel so well, it's the way the damn bus rocks and rolls over these mountains."

"It's all in your head, just stop thinking about it, here have another pretzel and finish off that one beer. It'll make you feel better. I feel fine."

"Christ Frank, no wonder you only had one, I've had five, ooops, Frank dammit, I feel like I'm going to. . . ."

The conversation was cut short as Big Man No. I clobbered by my seat on the way to the lavatory at the rear of the bus where he remained the rest of the trip.

I finally sat up and discovered we were about fifty miles from home (thanks to some divine providence) and since everything that could possibly happen had happened I felt reluctantly safe in just sitting looking out at the darkened scenery. We were passing through another mining town that was well known for its proverbial Saturday night killings and as the bus slowed up I saw a monstrous group of grubby looking teenagers standing on the corner under a street light. They signaled the bus driver to stop and even before the air brakes had finished hissing, the gang began filing on one by one. They were a strictly Ivy-League group: the boys all had D.A.'s key chains, and pink pants and their gun molls had that fresh all-American look: stringy, long hair, tight sweaters and skirts, and lots of make-up. There must have been about fifteen of them and they must have felt the safety of their number because they tried to take over the bus. They sat in the aisle, on the edge of other people's seats and one even tried to climb into the baggage rack.

Even this wasn't too bad for it was all happening at the front of the bus, then the J. D.'s began to work their way back in my direction, and one of the hoods and his gun moll *told* me to move across the aisle so they could sit together in my seat. I started to object because I figured the boy wouldn't hit me, but the girl's fingernails looked awfully long and sharp so quickly changing my mind I smiled and moved across the aisle. Just after all these kids had gotten seats by hook or crook, and the boy who had asked me to move had planted one or two on his girlfriend, one of the crew, obviously the gang leader, rang the buzzer and the bus pulled off the highway to let them all off at what looked like nowhere or would be soon when the "gang" invaded.

Thank heavens, the last fifteen miles of the trip were quiet and I finished Chapter 5 of *Catcher In the Rye* just as we pulled into the Glenmore bus station.

My parents were waiting with frantic looks on their faces, they had been pretty upset when I had written that my Scotch blood was forcing me to make that nasty bus trip instead of taking a luxury liner.

I bid "Goody-bye" to the head executioner who sat under the steering wheel and fell off the bus into the waiting circle of private investigators.

"How was the trip?"

I didn't want to alarm these poor old parents of mine too much, so I avoided the question and asked one of my own.

"Say Mom, is there any place around here where I can buy a Saint Christopher's medal?"

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover.....	Dicksie Lee Waterhouse
Page 4.....	Dicksie Lee Waterhouse
Page 9.....	Marta Tucker
Pages 11 - 14.....	Barbara Beam
Page 18.....	Barbara Beury

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The Brambler

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA



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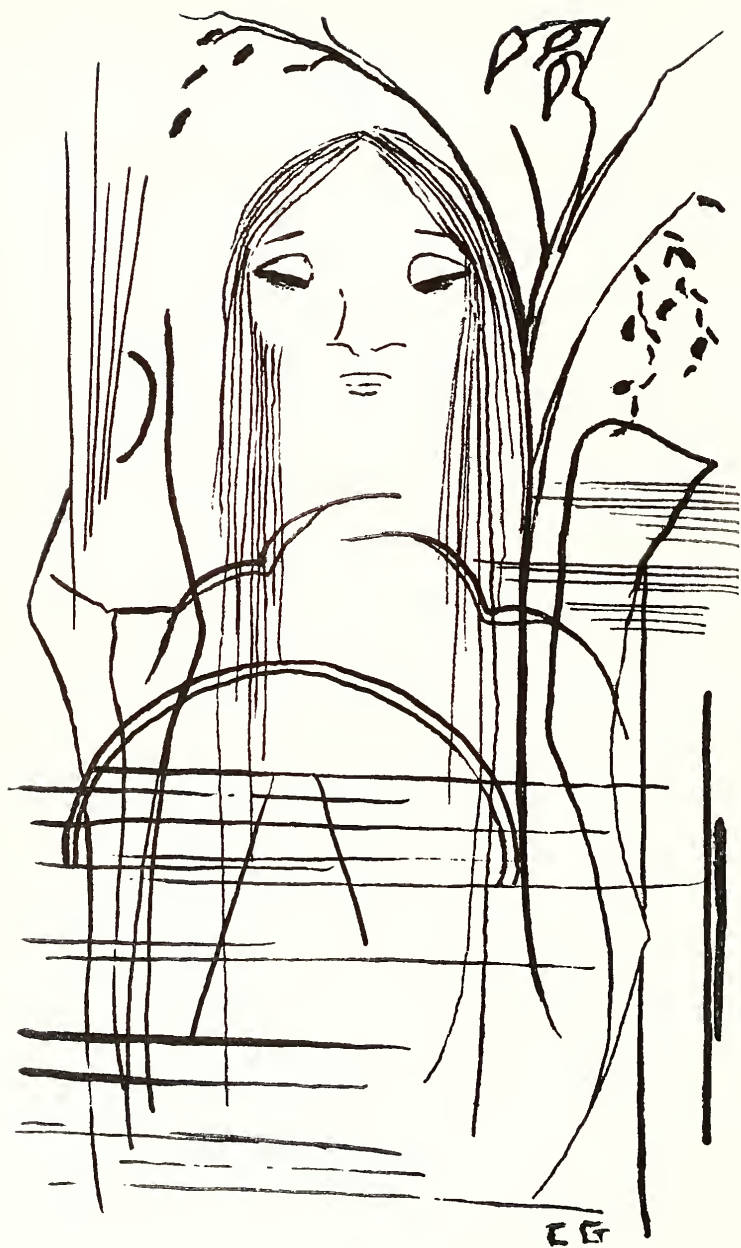
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DEATH IN FOUR RELIGIONS

Death of a Confusian

A false note of joy accompanied the silent crowd as the red robed priests, in their straw pedicabs, led the funeral procession. Lantern bearers ran ahead of the priests carrying bright blue and red characters that told the dead man's name and occupation. They read "Good Min Shih made shoes as fine as dove wings." Other men carried flower offerings; and the breeze played with the glass wind bells on the sides of the carriages.

In the rear of the procession Min Shih's body lay in a red painted coffin, which was carried by the male members of his family. This colorful parade stopped at the burial ground, where the coffin was to be lowered into the ground. Old mounds dotted the landscape like enormous hornets' nests.

A squinting, yellow-faced man helped his aged wife as they stepped forward, dress in coarse mourning clothes, to pay their final respects to their dead son. They placed red lanterns and tea beside the grave mound for Min's use. As his mother leaned down to the body, she held her husband's arm and pressed her lips together tightly.

After the procession passed the grave, and each person had offered their tribute, Min's mother remained behind and prayed:

*My heart is cold and dead, little son, fair and wise.
We who are left beg to please you. Remember us.
We will honor thee. We hold your memory close.
Thou wert filial and now to you shall we do honor.
Supreme Heaven fight for him the army of Demons.
Our lives now are sad, like the bent willow tree;
Colder than white sky and white birds are we.
Little Heart, remember me. Remember me.*

Death of a Muslim

Time had stopped. The suffocating dryness of the desert stretched beyond sight. In the hot shade of a yellow hill stood a group of black-robed people with their heads bent to the dirt. They seemed to be mute crows waiting to be fed. All was quiet except for the monotonous teasing drone of the insects.

Ila held her black-eyed baby close under her veil, as if its warmth could give her new life. She could not look at the child, but only stare at the yellow dust with hot, dry tears.

On an open bier in front of Ila was the figure of her dead husband. His white shroud and hands were arranged in prayer, making him appear to be in a stiff, cold sleep. She handed her squirming baby to her mother, and went forward to kiss her husband farewell.

Then she moved back stiffly for the body to be put in the grave. The priest leaned over the dead man and asked him the Catechism:

*"Who is thy God? Allah.
What is thy religion? Islam.
Who is its prophet? Muhammed."*

The strongest men lowered the body into the grave in the direction of Mecca as the priest prayed:

*"Allah is God and Muhammed is his only prophet.
Spare faithful Ibrahim from the owners of Hell Fire.
Believe, believe so it is taught,
And truly has this been done.
By all acts of devotion and faith did this humble man
Believe.
He was loved by all—his gentle camels, the laughing
Water sellers and the dusty beggar children.
High as the Plain of Arafat was his belief.
May his Book be of the right hand only.
Allah is God and Muhammed is his only prophet."*

The crows dispersed in silence, as the sun burned the land in an arid redness. There was only the sound of bare feet on sand and a baby's gurgle.

Death of a (Hinyana) Buddhist

It was the third and final day of the funeral services. The time was a Chinese May and the world was gay with spring greenery. Pink and red blossoms were everywhere. The final ceremony of the music festival was today. Dissonant, reedy tunes could be heard from the decorated pavillion.

The cause of the mock celebration was the cremation of a beautiful Chinese girl, Lin Fu. She lay in her coffin elegantly dressed in embroidered blue silk. Her hair was long and straight black and framed her olive face. She looked like a lovely painted doll. Bright paper lotus and cherry blossoms were arranged in the coffin to complete the illusion of quiet repose.

The music ended with a sudden crashing sharpness which gave Lin's father his cue to carry his daughter to the funeral pyre and prepare her for cremation. This was his duty as the highest ranking guest as well as her father, he set her body on the pyre and lit it.

The guests stood transfixed, waiting. Lin's younger brother and sister stood in frightened, wide-eyed silence clutching each other's baby hands. As the smoke faded into the graying afternoon the priest prayed: "May the beautiful innocence of this child spare her the Wheel. Neither ignorance nor craving were hers. She is a white dove—to fly to perfect whiteness. Life is lonely, but death is nothing. May she escape to Nirvana."

Afterwards, the ashes were collected in a fragile family urn and Lin's father led the way with it from the pavillion.

At home, Lin's mother placed the urn respectfully on the ancestor shrine and asked to be alone. She tried to pray but her only thoughts were:

*Dust is nothing—nothing is peace.
You are free, my child, free.*

Death of a Hindu

The dirty foam played with the feet of the men who brought Har's body to be washed in the Ganges. They were his sons, tall, handsome men with skin of mahogany and strength of panthers. They held the lifeless form of their dead father to be bathed in the purifying water. His toothless mouth hung open with only a stained white moustache to substitute for teeth. His dark skin gave the dead man a deceptive lifefulness. The eldest son began to chant:

*Cleanse the spirit of my aged father.
Now. Set him free! Set him free!
Break the cycle and let this weary one find rest.*

They raised him from the water and tied his white shrouded body to the ghat, they lit the open pyre and exclaimed simultaneously,

*Agni, red and gold, take your prize,
But be not selfish.
May the eyes go to cattle,
Teeth to a turtle,
Feet to a snake
And self with Brahman.*

The solemn group of mourners stood listening to the snapping, flames in a hypnotized silence. They felt only quiet resignation. The day died. The flames died.

Reverently the bones and ashes were taken from the pyre in cloth sacks and scattered at the water's edge. It was all over, and yet there had been only a momentary break in the cycle.

As the sky and water darkened into one, the sons felt this must equal the death part of the cycle. They prayed, "The Brahmen which is Atmen, become one with the Atmen of Har. Let him escape the life of insect, tiger, and human."

There were no stars, only darkness. The two brothers clasped hands firmly and felt that they were part of the darkness.

THE LIMIT

A short story in six chapters and one act, for anarchists, leaders and the rest.

THE office of Hell was an enormous place. It was so big that it had no walls and no doors and a very high ceiling with a little window in the middle. The office was divided into two Departments. The largest one was called the Department of Guilt. It consisted of many divisions, sub-subdivisions, sub-subdivisions and more divisions. Every one of them had very neat labels on which the following inscriptions could be read: THIEVES, RESPECTABLE LADIES, BLACKMAILERS, PRIESTS, TAX COLLECTORS and CRIMINALS. A specialized group of old, expert devils, very well-known for their efficiency, were in charge of the most important Division: KINGS—POPES—SURGEONS—NUNS—SECRETARIES OF STATE & DESPERATE WIDOWS. There was so much work to be done in this Division that the devils worked the hell-day through without any rest. They looked pale and exhausted. The redness and firmness of their horns which added such a desirably distinguished appearance to their features was beginning to fade away, and now their horns were wrinkled and brownish. But they did not complain; they had undergone special training to work there and it was a position of privilege which only the more capable could hold. They were very conscious of their importance. It was a matter of prestige, you understand. And so it was that in the Department of Guilt the devils had a perfect organization.

The other Department was very, very small. In fact, it was so small that it was hardly a Department at all. It had been out of use for many milleniums, but as it was part of the Constitution, no devil had asked that it be removed, for devils are traditionalists. It lay in a distant corner of the Office. There was a very old-fashioned type-writer which did not work; a book with rusty iron covers and nothing written inside it, some scattered yellow papers which once had been white, an old retired devil, and many rats. The old retired devil, dozing in a cobweb, was in charge of the type-writer, the rusty book, the yellow papers and the rats. This Department was called "Free from Guilt."

II

Something was going wrong in Hell. The tremendous amount of work had always been the subject of the devils' pride, and yet now, there was a general feeling of discomfort and unrest, especially among the younger devils. This had become a hell-wide problem which was seriously menacing the efficiency of the office. But the General Manager of the Department of Guilt could do nothing to learn the cause of the problem. He was a weak devil who had been put in office not because of personal merit but because of his ignorance and excellent economic position, and as he was quite old, he did not understand the new generation of devils and called them rebellious. One perhaps may wonder why it was that in such a perfect organization there would be such weak General Managers, for indeed, all the Managers and Supervisors were highly inept at their positions. And yet this arrangement of the work, far from being due to negligence, was the result of Satan's careful planning, for this way Satan was certain that the managers would never become powerful and that he would be able to influence and govern them at his wish. So it is that he led the devils to believe in a federal arrangement of the work while the whole scheme was nothing but a central government tactic in disguise. Apart from the direct influence on the managers, Satan also had a very useful policing system, and through it he later came to know of the alarming situation in the Office of Hell. This policing system was in his horns.

Satan's horns were no common horns, for they had some unusual properties which ordinary horns lack. This property he had developed through the ages, and since no one knew it but his assistant and himself, it was pricelessly useful. His horns had the power of transmutability. Through deep concentration in a special position and a special ritual, he could send all the energy of his body to his horns, and by a mental order he could project them to whatever place he wanted so that they could act as double organs of perception. Satan's horns were his private police and spies, but they were by no means perfect, for they duplicated or divided the image according to the circumstances, apparently obeying no prescribed laws. This division or multiplication of the image was an interesting phenomenon for it not only affected Satan's perception but also that of the devils who were in the same room where the horns were. In consequence, if Satan's horns chose to divide a devil in two, everyone would see only half of it and regard it as the most natural thing in Hell. All this is quite extraordinary but, indeed, the devils are so original! There is no way of knowing whether or not Satan was acquainted with the deficiency in his horns, but it is a fact that he was very satisfied with them.

III

Satan was in his studio drinking Vodka. It had been rather long since the last time he paid his horny visit to the Office of Hell and he really felt it was necessary for him to check again. Not that he knew there was any need for it, for in the last ages there had been no problem at all with the workers. But the new generation of devils seemed to be rather rebellious, and he wanted to be sure of what was going on. So he started to get ready for one of his horny trips, a procedure which he enjoyed referring to as "Operation Horns."

His horns were potentially powerful, but, to put them into action, he had to undergo a special treatment in his laboratory, which was on a distant and isolated mountain. So he called his private assistant who was the only one who knew of the power in his horns and who always helped him in the procedure.

"Perkins," he said when the devil arrived, "Have everything ready for Operation H." At his words, Perkins bowed with a conceited smile on his face. He was proud of being the only one who knew of his lord's secret and the only witness of his lord's transfiguration. So he went into the closet and brought back the shining red robes which Satan had to wear on this occasion. When everything was ready, they started their journey to the highest mount in Hell where Satan had his Laboratory.

IV

In the center of the room there was an elevation, something like a stage. Satan went back-stage, climbed the stairs and sat on a little bench behind the beautiful purple curtains. Perhaps there was no actual need for a stage setting of the images that the horns projected, but Satan was an artist at heart; he had played different parts on Earth very successfully, and in Hell he enjoyed theatrical performances. He was very particular about details too, and he had invented special lighting effects which added beauty and colour to the image that the horns projected.

Perkins followed Satan, carrying a little bag containing the necessary props. Then very pompously he undressed his lord and dressed him with the H robes. He took a little bottle containing a special magic liquid from the bag and started rubbing his lord's horns with the liquid. Then the horns gradually started changing colour; from red to purple and from purple to the deepest crimson.

"You are ready, lord," Perkins said ceremoniously.

"Ready," he said.

Perkins started counting, "One, two . . .," he deliberately waited so as to add an air of dramatic expectancy to the situation (after all he was playing an important role in the performance) . . . "THREE," he shouted triumphantly. When Satan heard the last word, he gave two or three big swings with his arms and made a very neat handstand while Perkins held him by the legs. Then his robes also started increasing in colour; they became brighter and brighter until they were dazzling red, and his horns became such a shiny red that its equal was not to be found in Hell. There was a great cloud overshadowing them while a very loud explosion was heard. The place began to rock to and fro, and while Satan and Perkins were thrown to the ground back-stage, the spectre of the horns, floating across a space of red no-time, entered the Office of Hell.

V

SCENE: The Office of Hell. There are no walls and no doors; there is a very high ceiling with one little window in the middle. A dazzling red light shines from below the purple curtains.

Enter devils in perfect order. The younger ones carry flags in their hand with the inscription "DOWN WITH SATAN." As soon as they come close enough to be seen, they become half their size. They sit on the floor noisily.

BEELZEBUB (*standing behind a high rostrum holding a gavel in his hand*).

The meeting will please come to order by singing the Office's song and the pledge of allegiance to Satan. (*While he pronounces the last words he grows double.*)

CHORUS OF DEVILS (*singing*).

Oh, Office sweet, our sweet song bear.
The horns that on our heads we wear
Shall never fail to show the care
We take, working on the sins of earth!
(They finish the song and say the pledge.)

BEELZEBUB

Is there any new business?

DEVIL I (*Takes folio from his pocket, opens it and reads*).

There is a considerable . . .

BEELZEBUB (*interrupting*)

Wait a minute, please.

(He bends and searches in his desk for the book of Parliamentray Procedure, takes it up, and, trying to appear casual, looks something up, blushing slightly.)

DEVILS Ha! Ha! Ha!

(*Many of them are so amused by the incident that they start clapping.*)

BEELZEBUB (*blushing even more raps the gavel several times.*)

Order please!

(*He tries to impress them with a serious look but he cannot keep it up and starts grinning.*)

The speaker may proceed.

DEVIL I (*Takes up his folio again and reads dramatically.*)

Comrades! There is a considerable feeling of discomfort among our comrade workers. This is because we can see through the window in the ceiling how the humans walk by with nothing to control them or to check them. They smile and are happy while we down here have not a moment's rest and sweat the hell day long. (Pompously) Satan has done *nothing* to prevent us from suffering this humiliation. (At this point he starts dividing until only half of him can be seen.) Satan is neglecting his duties towards us! (*He tries to excite the devils but he subdivides and his voice gets considerably lower.*)

GROUP OF DEVILS AT THE BACK

Privilege!

DEVIL I

Comrades! (*Shouting*)

Something must be done. We must rebel! (*He subdivides again.*)

BEELZEBUB

No need to get so hot about it. (Coldly) Is there a speaker for the motion?

DEVIL II (*He is not very sure what the motion really is but thinks it is a good opportunity for making himself popular and decides to repeat in his own words Devil I's speech.*)

We devils feel discouraged when we see the humans carrying on such easy lives. Each day our work increases and we need to be stimulated in order to bear it and the best stimulus would be to see the humans leading a life as hard as the one we have ourselves. Satan seems to be starting a policy of good will towards the mortals. (*The last sentence was entirely his own and he feels that he now commands the situation.*) By Heaven! We must rebel. (*While he sits down he starts dividing.*)

BEELZEBUB

Surely the speaker can say what he wants to say without being blasphemous. (*Looking extremely bored.*) Is there a speaker against?

DEVIL II

I agree that something must be done to control and check the mortals' lives, not only because we want to see them suffer but because our enemies of . . . *above* have contrived new methods to check the mortals' pleasure and easy lives and we are threatened with competition. Comrades, the unmentionable ones are challenging us and our torments for mankind are no longer the best nor are they up-to-date. But we do not need to rebel because of this. Surely our Lord Satan is very understanding and will hear us and help us to solve this problem. (*He grows double.*) Let us elect a representative to go and speak to Him on our behalf. (*He multiplies and there are now two devils exactly alike talking in a duet.*) Satan will help us out. (*Both sit down.*)

BEELZEBUB

We have to go back to work, so to make matters quicker I think we should vote on these two solutions. A: Rebellion against Satan. B: Sending a representative of all things over. (*Trying very hard to inhibit them.*) Is there any objection? (*He crosses his fingers behind the rostrum and closes his eyes.*) Oh Satan. (*Praying in a low voice.*) If somebody *must* raise his hand to object, pray let it be a short objection and not a very stupid one. (*Opens his eyes again. He cannot believe that there is no raised hand. Opens and closes his eyes a few times more and finally stares at them in amazement.*) Then will somebody make the motion?

DEVIL II

I move that the motion be passed.

BEELZEBUB

Is there a second?

CHORUS

Second.

BEELZEBUB (*he looks considerably relieved*)

We will now proceed in voting for the motion. Those in favour of A—rebellion—please signify by raising your horns. (*Two-thirds of the audience starts raising their horns but in doing so they immediately divide, so that there*

is only half of their number when the votes are counted.) Will you in the front please count the A votes? *(A devil gets up and starts counting.)* Those in favour of B—a representative—please raise your horns. *(One-third of the devils raise their horns but in doing so they multiply so there are twice as many.)*

DEVIL III *(Going up to Beelzebub)*

This is the result. *(Hands sheet.)*

BEELZEBUB *(First reads to himself)*

Part B of the motion, saying that we will send a Representative to discuss the problem with Satan, clearly passes by a two-thirds majority. *(He is a little bit out of breath, but he takes new impetus and starts again.)* I now want to make two announcements. Please keep off the clouds, and, second, please look at the damned bulletin boards and read the damned notices! *(Devils start giggling.)* Do I hear a motion to adjourn?

DEVILS

Hisssssssssssssssssss!

While they go out, the devils gradually resume their own shapes. The lights start fading away until the room is left in total darkness.

VI

Operation H had always left Satan exhausted, but this time he was more tired than usual, for he was faced with a new problem. The devil workers were ungrateful! He had always been ready to inflict upon mortals all kinds of suffering and limitations. Lately he had been working on a new device to torture them, and his technique was really becoming perfected, but he understood why it was that his men complained. "The little window in the ceiling," he thought, "That is the cause of all our sufferings." For since the day of the Fall, that little window had been placed here as a silent reminder of their rebellion. Through the window they had seen the mortals love and drink until the sight of it was unbearable. Satan decided to invent something which would control their love and drinking so that each time they yielded to those pleasures they would feel shame; and so one night he sent a messenger to earth carrying a black habit. "The black habit," Satan thought. "Ha, ha, ha, that was a brilliant idea." Even before that he had invented devices to check their lives, to limit their pleasure, but now he wanted to invent something which would make them lose the little freedom they had left. For men, with time, had also invented devices to escape from the curses of Satan. One of the limits Satan had sent them was the calendar, but it had long been out of use. They no longer felt urged or controlled by it. In fact, there had been cases in which people had even forgotten their working days, for the calendar remained on the walls, and most of the time they forgot to look at it. "No," Satan thought. "As a limit to man's peace the calendar has not proven to be very successful." Satan blushed as he remembered his failure, and he subconsciously tried to remember a big success. "Of course!" he thought. "My best invention was the system of laws. Oh! What times when every human either poor or rich was so controlled and checked by laws that their lives became really insufferable." But now some people had learned to escape the laws—the

state laws at the price of gold, the moral laws at night. And as those old men who in their old age enjoy recalling their youthful achievements, so did Satan dwell for many hours on the curses and limitations he had sent to mankind since the day of the glorious apple — the calendar, the priests, laws, critics, monogamy and middle classes. Certainly most of those inventions had been very successful, but this time he needed something more powerful still; something that would not leave them a moment's rest, something that would crush and mar the brief lapses of happiness they still had, something that would make them slaves, so that whenever they tried to escape from it they would feel they were losing something and they would live in uneasiness and unrest forever. Satan did not even stop to worry about the idea that perhaps men would rebel and not use the "present" that he was going to send them, for he was a very good psychologist and he knew how men loved those things which were bad for them. In fact, they had always received his little gifts with great joy, and they had put all his inventions into practice very eagerly so that when they started suspecting that they were being checked, it was too late, and they could do nothing about it. Of course, there were some unusually bright men who tried to tell them the truth, but nobody believed them. They were either burned, sentenced to death or called madmen, and there was no real danger from those who survived for nobody listened to them, and they lived as outcasts from society. It is true that certain wise men had managed to publish some very revealing books; books which were very deep and difficult to understand. These were read by fashionable young ladies who wanted to shock their mothers.

VII

In his laboratory Satan started mixing things in bottles and experimenting. "It must be round," he thought, "Round as the earth, round so there can be no escape from it," and with his instruments he cut a round disc of metal. "It must have arrows pointing towards something all the time; arrows which shall be always pointing until man becomes obsessed by them." So he placed in the disc two arrows. "It must make a noise," Satan continued, "A noise that will remind them all the time of its presence, a noise which will allow no moment of forgetfulness. A noise similar to that of the human heart, which must still go on beating so that men can still go on living. Yes!" Satan shouted exultantly, "A methodical, rhythmical noise like that of the human heart!" Then he tried to think of something more to add to the object. "A little rudimentary machine to make it work!" he shouted. "Men will love machines, machines are so destructive!" He finally added around the disc numbers from 1 to 12 and it was finished.

"Tic-toc-tic-toc," was the noise the object made. "Tic-toc-tic-toc," repeated Satan triumphantly. "A grand idea!" And, wrapping the object in very handsome paper, he sent it with a messenger as a gift to the king of the humans.

VIII

In the Office of Hell the devils were joyfully watching at the window on the ceiling. The humans were passing in a hurry. Many of them were running from one place to the other without knowing why or what for. And they looked up to the little round object on the walls of the buildings, in the towers of the temples, in their rooms and in their offices, and they smiled; they smiled because

they thought the object was the solution to their problems. Satan remembered how they had smiled when he had sent them each one of his curses. They had smiled only at the beginning and then habit—one of his best inventions—did the rest.

Very soon, the little round objects were everywhere. Some men were even carrying them in their pockets and many had tied them around their wrists. But they no longer smiled at their new toy—they did not have time to smile—they were running everywhere with frustrated looks on their faces.

After receiving the devils' congratulations and a little medal in commemoration of the event, Satan went up to the window and, looking at it with satisfaction, he caressed his horns. "Tic-toc-tic-toc—what music to my ear," he said. "Tic-toc-tic-toc," he continued. "A great idea! I'll keep it in mind for the next four or five centuries." And he thought of adding the satanic music to powder and sending it to the leader of the union of countries at the North of the yet Unknown Continent. "I have the strange intuition that they will make good use of it," he thought.

"Tic-to-tic-toc," Satan went back to his studio humming this music and immediately started writing his new book called "Why I Am So Wise."

ELIZABETH FEW

No Mr. Shapiro

Sweeney Shapiro sat on his Wasteland
and sang of the poets of disease and despair:

"there they go 'round the prickly pear,
prickly pear, prickly pear.
Critics and poets all are there
so early in the morning.

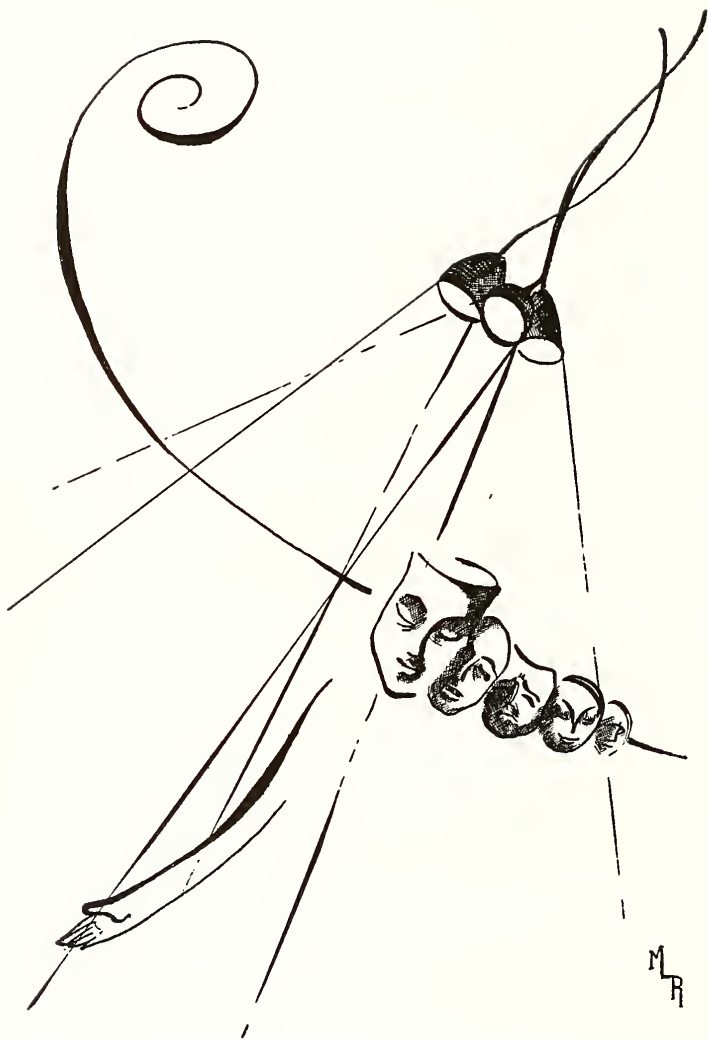
If I could, I'd say to Yeats,
say to Yeats, say to Yeats,
'Shakespeare is one of your pet hates
that's why your poems are modern.'

To you readers of the Times
of the Times, of the Times,
modern poems, I say, are crimes
my poems, of course, excluded."



Eliot, Pound, Stevens, and Moore
all point their fingers at Sweeny Shapiro.
They ask him only one brutal question:
"Have you read the poems?"

Sweeny Shapiro now sits on his Wasteland
and sings of his own disease and despair.



LUCY MARTIN

I Am A Swirl of Characters

I am a swirl of characters
Living lines, acting thoughts.
Beneath the colored lights
I laugh, I pose, I die . . . a little.

* * *

Many acts ago
The loose limbed goat was bled in glee.
The ancients snorted in their cushions
While chorus chants of hamartia whispered through their dreams.

The blood runs on
And still I smile.

Penciled eyebrow arched,
Acting all that's proper—I'm secure.
My lingerie is tinted.
My chatter most mature.
(Bravado charms the audience.)

Each day another role, a new pursuit.
Woman of a thousand masks!
But sometimes in the intermission when the clapping dies,
Comes the question,
Who am I?

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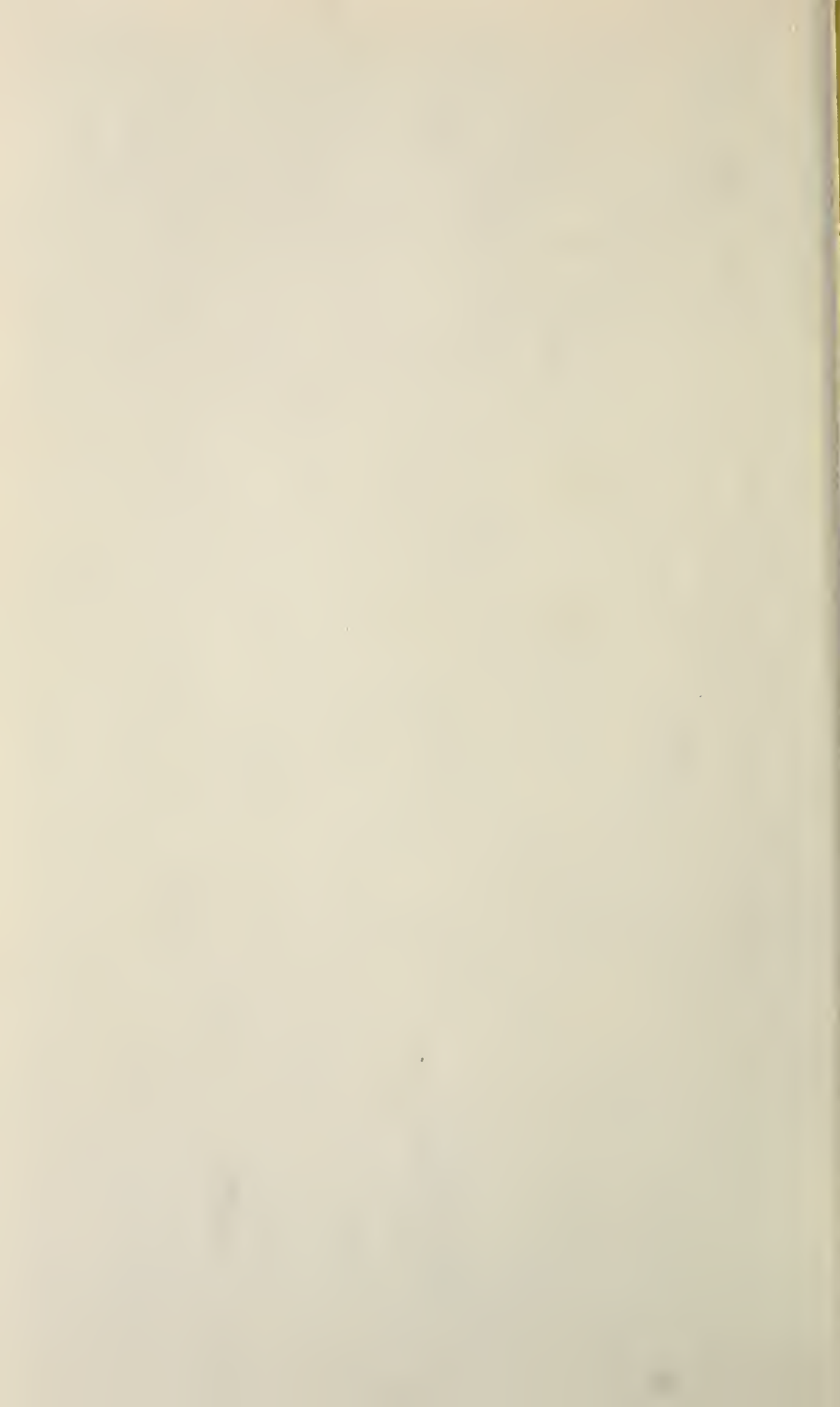
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VOLUME 37, No. 3

APRIL, 1960

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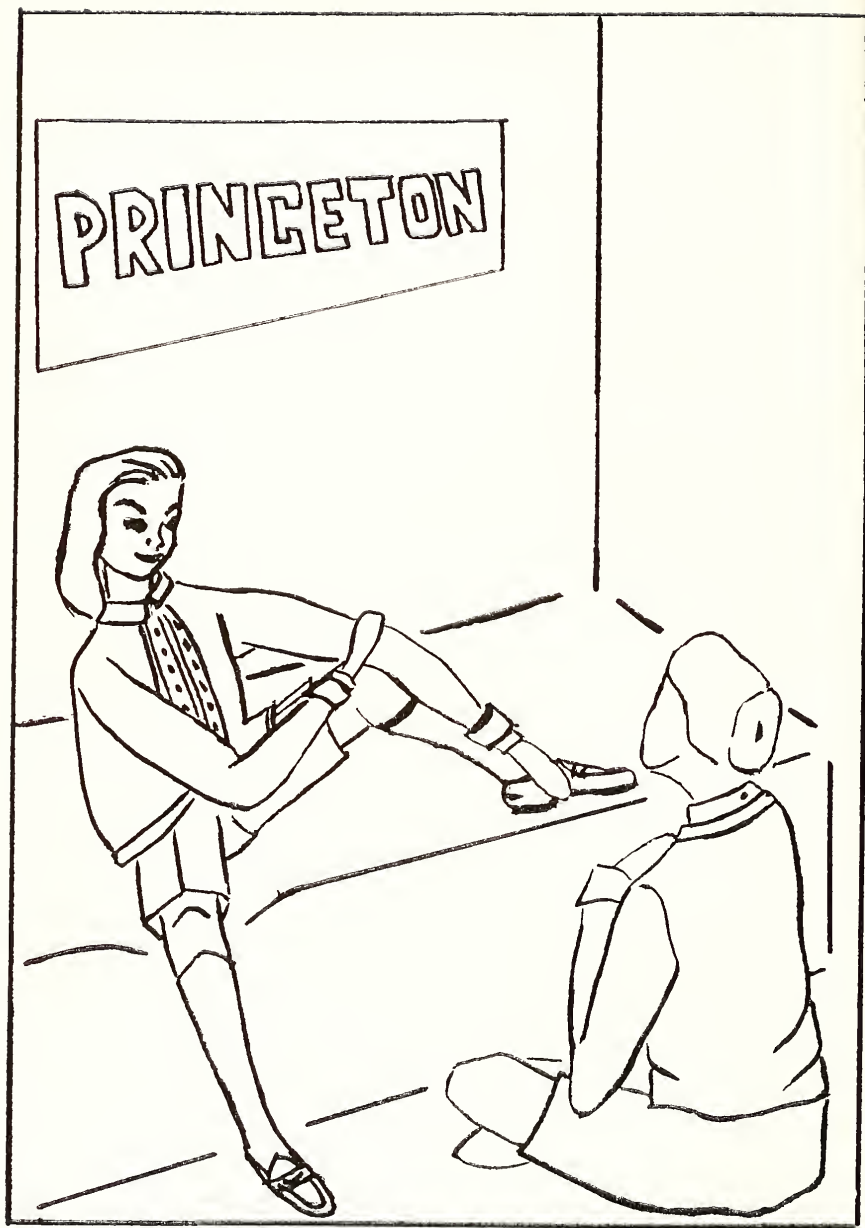
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FIRST THINGS FIRST

GO ahead, battle with sticks and stones, kick, bite, scratch, weep if you dare, curse, be belligerent, pretend it doesn't matter. laugh it off and then . . . be honest with yourself because you know it matters. . .

A polo coat won't keep out the chill. Not this chill. Leaves, mottled red, yellow, brown; gnawed, ugly and torn, swirled about Susan's feet. She kicked, hard and then felt silly for the seemingly childish gesture. So she did it again.

"Took you long enough, Sue." Tracy looked up at her roommate from under an array of wire curlers, one strand of red hair flopping off the roller onto her forehead, making her wrinkle her nose with exasperation. "Thought you'd forgotten all about me, including my stomach and my hamburger, after all. Welcome home!"

Even with her hair twisted around those rollers, even with her nose wrinkled up, she looked like a pixie. She wasn't beautiful. She looked like the kind of a girl you'd like to know.

Susan chewed on her lower lip, "snack bar was crowded beyond belief!"

"Oh? Bet that lunch must be the usual Monday meal of turnip greens and mystery meat. . ."

Susan sat down on the floor and wound her shoe lace around and around . . . she wanted so much to tell Tracy how she felt, she'd thought about telling her all morning, all the way back from the snack bar she had practiced how she would walk into their room; how she'd sit down at the desk, tilt her chair back against the radiator in the way her mother swore would get her neck broken some day and tell Tracy just exactly how she felt. But, when she sat down on the rug instead of in the desk chair all she said was, "Monday really ought to be abolished, roomie!" Oh golly. No wonder people said stupid, senseless things when they received tragic news. She looked at Tracy, "meant to ask you last night but I was afraid you were already asleep. Didja have a good time at the Christmas parties?"

"YOW! Did I ever! Just dreamy . . . Howie is really a darling. And what a dancer that guy is. I may not walk a straight line until next Wednesday! My feet are so sore! The whole house is just terrific! Really I, Sue! Honey, what's the matter. . ." She stopped in mid sentence and stared at her roommate.

"Nothing, Trace . . . Be right back!" Now, now she'd tell her. But, she didn't. She dropped her books on the edge of the bedspread and walked out of the room.

Everything had been going along so smoothly that it made it even worse, now.

She yanked the coffee pot off the shelf, filled it at the water fountain and plopped it on the hot plate. What'd she do that for! Coffee wasn't going to help matters any. Coffee wasn't going to do a damn bit of good.

A door opened at the end of the hall and MariBlair peered out of the doorway. She saw Susan and hesitated before she walked out of her room. She sauntered down the hall, leaned against the wall and slid her long fingers into the pockets of her tweed skirt. Squinting at the pot she inquired, "coffee? Gawd, I am absolutely dying for a cup of coffee!!! Got enough?"

Susan flinched. "Sure, want some right now?" Oh, a very bright comment, Stein. Obviously she wanted it right now if she was "absolutely dying" for some. Why couldn't she say something to MariBlair that didn't sound so insane? Why couldn't she say the proper, sophisticated thing just once? Like, "Of course, dahling, there's always enough. . ."

MariBlair obviously hadn't noticed a thing. Not much she hadn't. "I'd adore it. I'm simply chilled right down to the bone. There must be some reason for these calendar days but I'm sure that I can't see it. I simply adore hockey but I'm actually convinced that we're about to have SNOW! Can you believe it?"

Susan believed it. And she didn't care. Snow meant home. This wasn't home, and she was miserable. She wasn't sure of the logic behind her emotion. She didn't much care about that either. She poured the boiling water into MariBlair's cup, wondering if she were going to be lucky enough to miss the cup. "This enough? she asked. There's a bit more." If at first you don't succeed. . .

"Uh, uh. This's fine, thank you." She took a sip, grimaced, in a lady-like way, of course, looked up over the rim of the cup and said, "seen Winnie or Hunter?"

Susan had already turned towards her room. She answered over her shoulder, "No, no I haven't." Which happened to be a lie. Winnie was one of her best friends and she'd seen her not ten minutes ago at the snack bar. She was in no mood to talk to MariBlair about anything, including Winnie.

MariBlair accepted the information calmly enough and offering "see you'al" she turned and walked away, in no great hurry. Anyone could tell that this was her personal possession — this hall.

Susan looked after MariBlair, took a sip of coffee, glanced again at the retreating cashmere sweater and moved back again into her own room. Sanctuary.

Tracy was reading her latest letter from Terry (why, Princeton, naturally). She squirmed around as Susan sat down and twined her legs around the chair leg. "Seen the bulletin board yet?" asked Tracy.

"You kidding, Tracy? I spent the entire morning in the library trying to decipher my Spanish notes for tomorrow's quiz." Impossible task, by the way! I never can read my notes. Honestly Tracy, why do we have so darn many quizzes all in a bunch. I can't sit still for more than two minutes with all these Christmas decorations around and anyhow I—what's up?"

Tracy folded her letter and placed it between the pages of her book. Bending down she picked up a crumpled fluffy animal from the floor and played with it ears. Then squirming around on the bed, she propped the animal against her pillow and said, "The preliminary instructions for picking rooms for next year are posted."

"Oh" from Susan. Well, she might have known! As if things weren't bad enough now.

"Um. Looks as though we soph's get to draw last again. Doya suppose we could make arrangements to live in the president's house next fall?" Whoops, sore subject, bite your tongue, Tracy thought too late. Not supposed to mention 'next' anything . . . especially not 'next' fall. It was transfer time, only she kept forgetting. At least, she kept trying to forget that Sue was thinking of transferring. She hated to see her give up so easily. That was a little unfair, she supposed. It wasn't easy at all and she knew it. It was hell.

Well, even people in hell had to laugh sometimes. Susan laughed most of the time. Now, it came out as a tinkling sound as she smiled at her roommate: "Well now roomie, you never can tell. I'll see what I can do about getting you a room in the mansion." How odd it was that they both knew this 'thing' existed and yet they dared not discuss it again. They weren't afraid of it. Not exactly. And yet, they talked all the way around it.

Tracy glared at her roommate in mock ferocity. "Very funny, Stein, very funny! Just you wait 'n see if I'll invite you to dinner at the Mansion!"

"Sorry, couldn't possibly make it. Got to study, you know. First things first," Sue said. There it was again. First things first. How many times had she thought that? First things first. Accept what you are, first. Make 'them' accept you, second. Susan was still on the first step. It wasn't as though she hadn't been warned. It was just that she hadn't believed. Then. She smiled at Tracy and tried to tell her . . . "Tracy, I . . ." She faltered, and stopped. She choked. She wasn't going to cry. She wasn't! Opening one of the books on her desk she propped her elbows on the pages and said: "Wish I could think of some other way to learn these foul verbs!!" First things first. She would study now and think about 'it' later.

"Hey! Now listen Yo'al, when you find a method like that you just hustle it over to me in triplicate and we'll have it published."

Susan mouthed "O.K." She looked back to the section on verbs, flipping the pages slowly. She stared at the pages. They might as well have been blank. "Nuts." She really had meant to study. She stared at the walls, at the pictures of her family on her dresser, of her big, framed picture of "him" and wondered how all these dear, familiar things could be of so little comfort, now. Then, someone put on a Christmas Carol record and *The First Noel* echoed through the halls. God!, but that one last straw was heavy on an already tired back. She snatched her coat from the hanger, piled her books into her arms, mumbled 'bye' to Tracy and fled. She could hear the words, "Born Is the King of Israel" as she ran from the dorm.

She hadn't realized it was so late. She stopped running and her tears sparkled in the darkness. There was something about the dusk, here, that was like no place else on earth. She remembered, suddenly, one other place that was like this. O God, she wanted so to be home; to be a little girl again! There was something about the dusk, here, that made the ache so much worse. That is, when she'd admit that such an ache existed. Today, it existed. She laughed. Only, only, it didn't sound tinkling anymore — it sounded more like a sob. But she dared not cry. She'd be damned if she'd cry. She couldn't explain, even to herself, exactly why she wouldn't allow herself the luxury of a good, smashing,

hysterical tantrum. Maybe, because she knew it wouldn't do any good anymore. But, dear God!, how did you expect her to explain to herself, how did you convince yourself that there was peace on earth, good will toward men when you knew exactly how far away from it Germany was, how far away from it Minnesota and New York were. How did you make yourself believe in such a thing as universal love and charity towards all; how did you make yourself believe it when you knew it wasn't true? When you knew that all the barriers weren't down at all, that they were just covered with bright lights and silvery balls for the holidays, only to have the spikes show again when the Child was taken from his fire-proof manger and stored until next Christmas. How could you accept the laughter and the joy when you knew deep within you that the difference between a Menorah and an Evergreen would stifle the laughter, squelch the joy, and leave you outside, looking in. She had tried. Believe, believe that she had. She had accepted the explanation that different people from different backgrounds, learned different things about the other people who inhabited their earth. Oh, an accident, most assuredly! Different! She hated that damned word so! The next time somebody told her that she was 'different' she was going to spit. Well, different or not, she had studying to do. Feeling sorry for herself wasn't going to do much good.

The lights in the library made her blink suddenly. Or, perhaps it was just the unshed tears. . .

Girls in shetlands and kilts filled the reading room. Almost every table was littered with papers, note cards and books. Susan walked between the rows of tables and girls looked up and smiled in her direction. At least she thought it was her direction. She resisted the temptation to glance over her shoulder, and smiled back. Sometimes she was so happy here. She found an empty place, sat down, and opened the verb book again. It still looked blank.

* * *

Tracy looked up as the door opened noiselessly. Her eyes were red. MariBlair walked in and peered at Tracy through her new contact lenses. "Busy?" She asked. Not that it would have made much difference. How could anybody be too busy for MariBlair?

Tracy stretched. "Nope, come on in, MariBlair."

MariBlair arranged herself in the room's only armchair, crossing her long, slim legs exactly at the ankles. "Hey, yo'al, love yo record. Who's it by? Doesn't Christmas just drive yo simply insane?"

"Frankly, yes. But today I'd rather listen to Johnny Mathis than write my philosophy paper; he requires less attention than Camus, so. . ."

"Hey. Seen the bulletin board yet?" MariBlair pushed the broken spring back into the stuffing of the armchair as she asked the question. Conveniently, it turned her face away from Tracy.

"Yup. Why?" Tracy rolled out of her desk chair and plopped herself on the bed along with a dozen or more stuffed animals. There was just about enough room for her. "You know I read the bulletin board faithfully, MariBlair, follow the rules 'n regulations to the letter and read it almost every hour on the hour . . . what's up?"

"Nothing, really Dahling. Just wondered if you'd seen it yet. Did you have a simply fabulous time this weekend?"

"Um . . . dreamily scrumptous. I was just telling Sue about it but then she bombed out of here so fast that I . . ."

MariBlair chewed her gum a little harder and sat up a bit straighter . . . if such a thing were possible. "Oh, meant to ask you, I mean, I just started to ask you, have you thought much about your room? For next year, I mean."

Tracy bounced a Princeton tiger on her stomach and muttered, "oh my Lord, um-hum with eleventy-five tests and two papers . . . sure have given it lots, just oodles, of thought! Are you kidding? No, seriously, I haven't thought much about it yet. Big study spree going on in here, 'member? Why?"

MariBlair stopped chewing. She pressed her lips together tightly and then thought better of the idea. "Oh, comeon Gracy! Haven't you had just about enough? Since when are you the big shot TOLERANCE major around here? The next thing we know you'll be putting one of those eight thigamiggig candle holders next to the tree and we'll all. . ."

The Princeton tiger stopped bouncing. "Look, MariBlair, it happens to be called a Menorah, and if that was your idea of some terribly hilarious joke then I. . ."

MariBlair stood up. "Some joke," she said. "Listen Tracy, I simply cannot, I mean that I just don't think that. . ."

"Well, hi yo'al." Hunter walked in with an unlighted cigarette in her hand. She was always 'just about' to have a cigarette. She pushed her blonde hair out of her eyes and dropped her sweater near a chair arm. "Hey! Seems like ages since I've seen you Tracy. Haveanicetimeatthe U?" The words tumbled out all together as though she was anxious to convince Tracy that she really did want to know and was not just asking to be polite or something. She sat down and even the walls relaxed a little. "I've got a proposal to propose. Where's Winnie? Can't very well propose a full house proposal without a full house, can I? Oh, golly, 'scuse me, MariBlair, I thought you were Susan." She ignored the look on MariBlair's face.

"Winnie is having her gown fitted for the fourth time, said she'd be back a little later and Sue is in the library. What's the proposal, Hunter?"

Hunter had to think about a question that was all that direct. It confused her but she rallied bravely: "Well, ah, how about us all getting a suite for next year? Isn't that a keen idea for a Monday afternoon? I thought of it soon as I read the bulletin board." She giggled.

Tracy rolled over on the bed. "Golly, it sounds like a pretty keen idea to me, Hunter." The Princeton tiger resumed his ride, "Suzy'll love it!!"

MariBlair picked a piece of fuzz off of her new cashmere. "Oh?"

Hunter giggled again. She always giggled when she was nervous. Then she picked up the Tiger off Tracy's bed and tossed it into the air. "Um MariBlair, look, ah. . ."

The Tiger landed on the floor. He lay there. Tracy looked directly at Hunter, aghast at what she imagined was to come.

MariBlair kept picking at that fuzz. Slowly she said, "Well, actually, ah, I, well I hadn't thought, actually, that we were asking Sue. Not exactly, I. . ."

Tracy stiffened.

She had known for a while that it was going to come to this. That one day the three of them would sit and quibble, sit and judge, calmly, slowly, shut out

a friend because of what happened centuries ago, because of their parants and their parents and their parents.

Tracy wished that she could stand up and scream just to relieve the tension in the room. But she didn't. Because she couldn't. She sank down into the armchair, waiting.

Hunter sank down on the floor. Hunter, who never sat down where a lady should not sit. Hunter, who had never had to make much of a decision before. It had all been decided for her; her debutante gown, the color of her car, her dates, the college she would attend; now, should make a decision that would be her own, all her own . . . but somehow, she was afraid to try. She wasn't quite sure that she wanted to think for herself. She wasn't quite sure that being Sue's friend here was worth having a feud about at home. Mommy had told her that people like Susan were a little different.

MariBlair looked at Tracy, then at Hunter. She was not accustomed to having the girls reject her slightest inference. She wasn't going to allow this thing to get out of hand! It was too, too trivial. After all, only four of them could live in a suite. She counted on her fingers; Tracy, Winnie, Hunter, and herself! Susan would make five. That solved the problem in itself. Who could they leave out but Susan?

Hunter looked up at MariBlair with a strange expression on her face, then turned to Tracy and said, rapidly, because she was a little afraid, "let's see if we can find Winnie and Suzy so we can plan the big move. . ."

Tracy looked at her. She smiled, slowly. "What big move, Hunter?" She could have hugged her!

"Well golly, how we'al are going to get a suite for next year!"

MariBlair walked out.

* * *

Sue met her two friends on the steps of the library but it was Hunter who said,

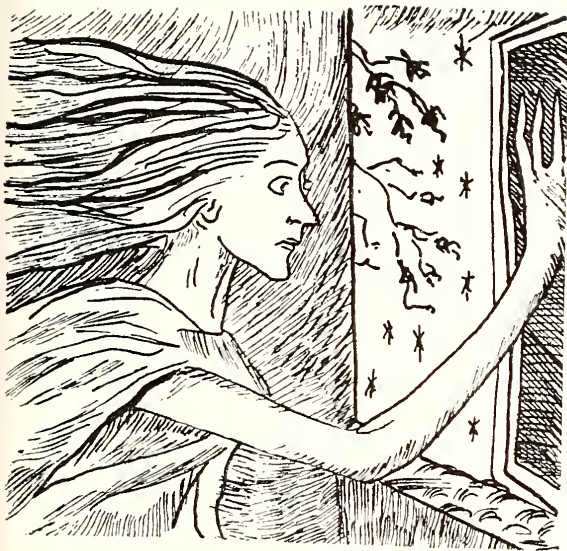
"Suzy-Q we've been lookin' all over for you!"

Suzy looked startled. "Why" she said. She had fought it all out for the last time there in the library. She couldn't fill out that transfer application. She knew where she belonged. This place was a part of her. Her friends were her friends because they loved her; because they accepted her for what she was. Everywhere there was misunderstanding and this college wasn't any different. But she couldn't solve a universal problem, she could only do something about her own problem. She could face it for what it was, a small part . . . of a greater whole.

She had left her books scattered all over the table and started out to find Tracy, to tell her, finally. Now, she'd found her. But she didn't have to say a word. They knew. Hunter had said it all.

The three girls walked down the library steps. . .

SUZY RUSMISEL



Windward

LAST night I hardly dared to sleep. The wind
Pulled me with the concave curtains windowward,
Outward to wind-wrought Everchange, urgently
Compelling as God's index plucking nerves
To singing life in Adam or an embryo.

ELIZABETH MEADE

Unicorn

HOW can I be sure that unicorns
Play in the woods
And dance to the piper's flute
On lonely snowfall nights?

I searched
For snowprint feet
And golden wimples
Caught on a low green bough.

I found
A shadow caught in air.

To The Zoo

THE seals were terrific. Of course, it was a good day for seals — cold enough for their comfort, and just cold enough for our discomfort. Neither of us said much, as it was New Year's Day, but the kids were having a wonderful time. We had been walking on Fifth, and who could have resisted the "TO THE ZOO" signs? The discussion had something to do with purple poodles, and the next thing we knew, we were in the Cat House holding our noses. Now that I think of it — it was all because of the sun. We happened to be walking down the wrong side of the street — the one into the sun, and because of the day it was, and the night it had been, and our unfulfilled wish for sunglasses, we took our first right — and there we were — in the Zoo; the Central Park Zoo, of course.

"Fred," I said, "I've got to see an ostrich."

"Very well," said Fred, "I think you'll like the bears."

And so we saw them. There were all kinds: Polar, Kodiak, white and black. Each illegal bear-feeder was fighting his way to the rail and throwing bits of food that he thought best. Balloons were breaking everywhere, and the oldsters were waiting patiently on the other side of the walk for their chance to break in among the youngsters and distribute Cracker Jacks.

"Fred," I said, "why not popcorn or peanuts? Surely they haven't been outdated."

"Very well," said Fred, "you will see the Hippos." And so we did. Now that I think of it, I did talk quite a bit, but Fred said very little—so between us, we didn't say much.

The Hippos were in the best of form. There was even a baby that I recognized by his picture in the papers. He had been born in captivity and weighed forty pounds at birth. I had read that his mother was very jealous and wouldn't let the father see the baby. The father seemed a nice fellow, but didn't look very interested in child birth. The mother was indeed jealous — so jealous that she hid the child behind and partially beneath her stomach, which stretched to the floor. In order to be completely hidden by such a Hippo — a baby Hippo would have to weigh very little — very probably about forty pounds — and though I couldn't see him, I recognized him by his size.

"Look Fred," I said, "the famous Hippo, and elephants that are tame, and look — the alligators in the pool, and that old woman in black."

"Watch it lady. Not so near the railing."

"I beg your pardon young man, but this is my camel and I'll feed him today as I have every day since he arrived at this house."

"Sorry, Mrs., didn't recognize you in that black scarf. How are you today?"

"Very sad, Mr. Zoo-keeper. The old ocelot has passed away. I just hope this isn't a sign of what's to come in the New Year. . ."

"Fred, Fred — these people aren't well. I'm certain the ostrich house isn't this way. Let's do see. Fred, did you hear those people?"

"There is no ostrich house," said Fred. "But we might be able to find an ostrich. With luck, we might possibly find one."

"Let's look," I said. "It shouldn't be hard as long as we're in Central Park."

I gathered that Fred must have been feeling better by then, as his speeches were now overflowing with words, and I do believe he smiled at the end of his last sentence. The little children laughed and screamed and swung on the rails in front of the G-gnus. The Yaks were quiet, but the Bison were annoyed at being disturbed.

"Fred," I said 'do you really think we can find what I'm looking for in the Monkey House?"

"My dear," said Fred, 'you never know what you'll come across in the Monkey House." Now of course, because it wasn't summer, the monkeys were not in the best of moods. Some were making love and were disinterested in the outside world, but there were many just staring between the bars — quite unloved.

"Fred, where are you going? Oh, of course. I'll meet you at the pony rides."

The sun wasn't as bright anymore, and the roasted chestnuts were just what I needed. The bench in front of the pony rides was comfortable, but I don't think I'll ever get the popcorn off my coat. Of course it was a relief to see that popcorn was still used, but it was reserved only for the wild animals — the pigeons and the squirrels.

"Sorry lady, but this is my seat. There's one down the walk you could sit on if the old codger laid one on last night. It's usually empty during the day."

"Excuse me, sir, I didn't know it was yours. Ponies are in good shape, don't you think?"

"Sure lady, sure — you can see horses if you like 'em — few blocks down at the Plaza. Nice group they got there."

"Why thank you. I may do that. You haven't by any chance seen an ost . . ., oh, Fred. Well thank you. Fred, that man says there are some larger ponies at the Plaza. Fred, why don't you say anything?"

"Well," said Fred, "I know of some large rats in an outdoor pool."

And so we saw the seals. It was an experience. They were having a real battle. There were three of them, and I've never seen seals swim so fast or bark so furiously. The kids were cheering them on and placing their bets. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty Dumpty had a great fall.

"Fred, did you know that children were sadists?"

"Why," said Fred, "I never thought of them quite that way, but perhaps that's why I don't like them."

"Don't like children? How could you Fred," I said. "How about a cup of coffee at the Mayflower Shop? It's right across the street from the Plaza, and we could see the horses."

"Very well," said Fred.

And so we followed backwards the signs that said "TO THE ZOO," went up the stairs, and found ourselves back on Fifth.

Verbatim

(Two speakers for the continuation of English seminar)

STUDENT: "Mr. C——, could you summarize William Carlos Williams' philosophy of love as expressed in his poems?"

PROFESSOR: "Why do you ask?"

STUDENT: "Because I've heard so many people talking about it."

PROFESSOR: "What do they say?"

STUDENT: "How much they like it."

STUDENT: "Mr. C——, did Williams write a poem about yachts?"

PROFESSOR: "Yes."

STUDENT: "What was the name of it?"

PROFESSOR: " 'Yachts.' "

NORRIS SMITH
KATY GROAT

For The Pleasant Mr. Lear

THERE was a young man with a beard
Who said, "it is just as I feared;
When I walk down the streetnik
The people yell Beatnik!
And when I saw Edward, he leared."



Macbeth and the Apocalypse of Evil

EVER since the Archangel Michael and his angels cast the Dragon out of Heaven, the "old Serpent" has been trying to get revenge wherever he can in God's good creation. Though Satan's power is great it has the limitations of any ultimately inferior minority force — evil can create nothing on its own, but can only imitate the original, genuine universe; it has no effect unless it finds the proper instrument on which to work out its schemes; and finally (the fact always nagging at Satan's back), evil has, as the book of Revelations says, "but a short time" to plan and carry out destruction before the seventh trumpet sounds and the once Brightest Angel goes back to the bottomless pit. In *Macbeth* we see Satan's power rise to a peak, working within its limitations to achieve the most it can — imitating, finding a human carrier of its disease, and twisting time to escape its eventual subjection to time. The growth of evil in the play is so definite and assumes such monstrous proportions, that it seems to be, as G. Wilson Knight has said, the Apocalypse of Evil, a Satanic parody of the Lord's Last Day.

Macbeth is neither primarily a study in fear (Lily Campbell) nor a tale of thwarted ambition. Both of these elements are incorporated into the larger theme of naturalness and evil working in and against time. The morality play features are as strong through most of the play as they are in the last act of *King Lear*. (However, Sakespeare never forsakes character for pure allegory. Though *Macbeth* is more concentrated and has less room for thorough personality development of all the characters, the central figures of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth [and to a great extent Macduff] are living, real, and psychologically explainable.¹ They may not be as complex as Hamlet or Cleopatra, for they live in a tighter world where the heavenly and diabolic forces take up much space; yet they are complete enough for us to know that the play is about human action and feelings — despite intervention from the Other World.)

When Macbeth (IV,i) asks that the weird sisters answer his questions, the first witch replies, "Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths, Or from our masters?" This reaffirms our knowledge that these creatures, although they help evil to grow in Macbeth, are only handmaidens of a higher evil. By equivocation and outright temptation they water the unnatural seeds in Macbeth, but when Macbeth himself turns to evil he is drawing straight from "the master"; and Satan, or whatever this "master" of evil may be, has found a human vehicle for his apocalypse. The witches have been boiling their brew since the first scene,

¹If one wants to do that.

and the evil of civil war is working in the battle that is being lost and won; but the terrible machine of destruction in the apocalypse does not start until Macbeth becomes impressed with the prophecies that "sound so fair" and begins to muse, "And Thane of Cawdor too; went it not so?" (I,iii,87).

The witches are working in the "fog and filthy air," and this dark atmosphere pervades the play, accompanying evil whenever it appears. The figure of the Light of Grace emerges as the counteraction grows strong, but for the most part the scene is murky. The description of the triumph of dullness at the end of Pop's *Duncaid* also fits the dark Apocalypse of Evil:

Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word. . .

In this blackness, lit only here and there by a madwoman's candle or a doomed man's torch, it is easy for one to lose a sense of time. The world is so shady, elusive and slippery with blood, that it is not difficult for Lady Macbeth to lose sight of her right place in time, to see the future in the instant. Macbeth's imagination works as it would at night, making dreams (in which time is an illusion) out of normal experience. A clear motive for Duncan's murder is hidden in the gloom, and the deed takes on a nightmare quality of a hazy sharpness or an unreal reality.

Even though Macbeth and his wife, carrying out their murderous plots in a world where the moon is always down, are called the "butcher and his fiend-like queen," they are no more than human beings — obsessed and deluded, but still retaining a great amount of naturalness. The fact that they are human makes the appearance of evil in them especially horrible. Frightening as the witches and the unseen master of evil are, their wickedness is native to them; they are at home in it — one type of "natural supernaturalism." When unnature starts becoming the order of the day to Macbeth, terror reaches its height and the apocalypse reaches the stage in the parody where a seventh demon could sound a broken trumpet. Macbeth has made the dagger in his mind a real thing; he cannot realize any more that he is meddling with the normal succession of seconds and minutes; he repeats murder almost with ease, saying to the murderer about Banquo's blood, "'Tis better thee without than he within. Is he dispatch'd?" (III,iii,14) At this point he is, like Richard III, steeped so far in blood that he cannot say such things as, "There would have been a time for such a word;" he can only keep on in darkness, shouting his imaginative rhetoric to a world turned upside down, still trying to stop the birth of the babe or the growth of seeds. At the murdering of Macduff's family, the natural manliness of Bellona's bridegroom becomes as obscured and distorted by Satan's plans and the witches' prophecies as character can be and still be recognizable as human.

The mind in which dreams of evil can grow until they become action is a fascinating piece of work. Though Macbeth may be the instrument or "culture plate" for evil, he is also his own agent, as it is his mind which receives and accepts evil and determines what form it shall take. Even the *Übermensch* cannot work through the witches' world, and Macbeth's murders take place in the realm of human action. Unlike his wife, Macbeth has an exquisite imagination, which, while it enables him to think of power and of ill ways to get it, is also deeply Christian. A man like Macbeth can never succeed completely in evil; for although

his mind is good for Satan's planting, it is filled with a real and tender conscience from which evil cannot escape. If Macbeth's susceptible imagination is his *hamartia*, it is also his saving virtue (as much as he is saved) when it acts as his conscience. Except for a few blind moments, mentioned before, when evil is at its height, Macbeth's tortured mind always realizes "deep-down" man's strange but natural, and inescapable, position in time. Man lives, first of all, in the present — second by second, one minute at a time; yet man can, with that beautiful and fearful imagination, go back to his own past, think of others' pasts, and go any distance into any future. The natural and rather difficult thing to do is find and keep the right balance in and out of actual, present time. This balance should come easily with everyday living, but such is not always the case, especially in the lives of those like Macbeth, whose quick thoughts are constantly looking for new opportunities and testing human abilities to the utmost. Macbeth, as the chief human rider in the Apocalypse of Evil, loses the balance; and he keeps trying (although his conscience will never condone it) to change and rush time and to divorce a fact from its appropriate value. He makes sure for himself, by murdering Duncan, that the witches' prophecy will come true; yet he knows that in doing so he has destroyed nature's time. Lady Macbeth, looking for an easy fact, can say "What's done is done;" but Macbeth's conscience cannot separate the fact (murder) from what goes with it (punishment). His terrible remorse begins immediately after he has committed the murder:

How is't with me, when every noise appalls me?
What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

(II,ii, 58-63)

This fact and its value hound him to the end.

From the moment Macbeth "seems rapt withall" at the weird sisters' promises, the evil set into motion keeps relentlessly on the crucial point, where it must either triumph completely or break. For a long time, it appears as if the Apocalypse of Evil will be lasting; for the great murder of the King takes place before the second act is half over; Macbeth is crowned king, and the line of bloody deeds seem to "stretch out to the crack of doom." As goodness flees, like Malcolm and Donalbain, the dark world grows more monstrous. Darkness, blood, and fear are the marks of evil's reign. Macbeth and Banquo first invoke the witches, to learn from them dark secrets, and finally Macbeth and Lady Macbeth invoke the night itself to cover their deeds.

. . . Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blankets of the dark
To cry, "Hold, hold!"

(I,v, 51-55)

. . . Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
(I,iv, 51-51)

There is always "husbandry in heaven;" no one can see who does the murders. The blood image occurs often — from the sacred, golden blood of Duncan (called "gilt" by Lady Macbeth) to the entrails and offal in the witches' caldron. Everyone is afraid, Macbeth perhaps most of all; and it is his fear that keeps him from listening to his conscience and leads him further into hellish unnature:

Murderer: . . . Most royal sir,
Fleance is scap'd.

Macbeth: Then comes my fit again. I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air;
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears. . .

(III,iv, 20-25)

When kings are killed and evil is on the march, the horrors are reflected in nature itself. As in *Julius Caesar*, we find a world of fearful omens — horses eat each other, gloom comes over the day, ghosts walk. To meet this unnature, the murderers try to dehumanize themselves, an attempt which works for a time, but eventually fails. Lady Macbeth cries:

. . . Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood;
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief!

(I,v, 41-51)

Fair becomes foul. The promise of the angel with the book in the *Revelation* (chapter 10), that "there (shall) be time no longer" is given its demonic parody in the Apocalypse of Evil, as time gets turned around — the future is called forth, hastened by murders; then Macbeth tries to stop the natural succession in time by killing Banquo and Macduff's children. Evil begets evil (as evil can create nothing new, but can only imitate), and the murder of Duncan is recapitulated in the second act by the murder of Banquo; the third cycle of evil is completed in the death of the Macduffs.

And where has the Good been all this time? Not far away. While Macbeth and his sin reign in Scotland, the good forces are assembling in the south to lead a crusade against "the tyrant;" and even in Scotland there is, we hear

later, discontent and potential rebellion in Macbeth's ranks. The scene in which Macbeth's *hybris* reaches its highest point (the Banquet scene) is immediately followed (not counting the unShakespearean Hecate scene) by the rise of the good forces, whose cause takes the form of a holy war to avenge the death of an anointed sovereign and to put down the powers of evil.

The play *Macbeth* is the Apocalypse of Good. It is, again, more than a simple morality play, for the angels of light which drive out the darkness are completely human. Banquo, whose ghost mocks Macbeth in his *até*, has had in him the evil of being a complacent accomplice; Macduff also has in him the mixture of fair and foul, for he deserts his wife and children; Malcolm, though a prince, is still a man and can pretend foulness. (IV,iii) However, finally, the fair and foulness, which have been mixed throughout the first half of the play, become distinguishable; and as the fairness organizes itself, it becomes evident that "things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward to what they were before." (IV,ii, 23-25) The turning point comes in Macbeth's *até* scene, when Lady Macbeth says prophetically that the night is "almost at odds with morning, which is which."

The normal world has, all in all, never been far off. De Quincey has noticed this and has written beautifully about it in his essay "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*." In the middle of a scene of sublime horror — if Charity Paul will grant me such an expression — the "goings-on of human life" show themselves, and the human heart breaks in upon the fiendish.¹ For a moment good has had to retire before evil, but natural time cannot be stopped forever.

We must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested, laid asleep, tranced, racked into a dread armistic; time must be annihilated, relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion. Hence it is that, when the deed is done, when the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds; the knocking at the gate is heard, and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them.²

Macbeth hangs on to his delusions when his evil world gives way, but he is aware that he cannot defeat time and that his whole rise has been a fall from the start. His conscience tells him the truth about the Apocalypse of Evil — that in due course of time the Dragon will have to slink back to the pit. He has tried to convince himself that he can live as much out of that due course of time as he wants; but he finally has to face the fact he has known all along, that

¹Thomas De Quincey, "On the Knocking of the Gate in *Macbeth*," from *Collected Works* (Edinburgh, 1890) p. 393.

²*Idem*.

if one looks into the seeds of time all one will see is that more seeds will grow, that even the *Übermensch* and his diabolic language cannot stop the birth of the babe, until the Good Angel with the Book comes. For Macbeth, however, this is a bitter lesson; he does not realize its glorious implications. Hence he has no complete *anagnorisis*, no understanding of his human ignorance. He recovers what he had to start with, his basic manliness; but he never finds the power, or humility, to say, as Lear did, "I am a very foolish fond old man." Perhaps it is his imagination, his tragic flaw, which keeps him from his *anagnorisis*—that imagination which exalts his situation and makes him cry, "Lay on, Macduff, and damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'" (V,viii, 33) All that time means for Macbeth, now that his wife has died and his kingdom fades, is a weary succession of day after day — a long line of tomorrows. His "tomorrow" speech is the most hopeless passage in the play, and for Macbeth it is the truth; although there's more to the story than that.

The Uncreating Word has spoken its last syllable, but recorded time keeps on. The "great doom's image" has come in a Last Day battle which forecasts the final Apocalypse when "there shall be time no longer." As in *King Lear*, however, the Battle was only a symbol of Judgment Day; for the surviving characters in *Macbeth* the "time is free." No one is in the dark and alone, like poor Lady Macbeth; they are going into the natural world of light and living society to plant newly with the time. Since life continues we know that the witches are probably just around the corner brewing a new dram of e'il and that the once bright angel will crawl out of the pit at the first opportunity he gets. We also are just as certain that angels are bright still and that grace will eventually shine through the foulest air.

"Terminat hora diem, terminat author opus."

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SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

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EDITORIAL

OUR cover refers to a supposed mathematical law of averages, that if four monkeys equipped with typewriters were put in a room and left there for a million years, they would eventually type out everything that has ever been written. Of course there would be practical disadvantages to this scheme, but we shall not quibble over details.

In past issues the quality of our contributions has been good, but there has not been much choice or range. It would be a pity if creative writing at Sweet Briar should decline to such an extent that we might be forced to get our material from monkeys! Luckily we all know that this is not the case, and we are sure that those people who are interested in having a good literary magazine will also come forth with something worth printing. Therefore it is with confidence that we, the new staff, bring forth our first issue of THE BRAMBLER.

K. G.

A QUESTION OF VALUES

FRED was descended from all the "best" people, and he always tried to remember this and act accordingly. He was conventionally good-looking with his dark hair and blue eyes, conventionally dressed in his tweed suit, and unconventionally nervous as he waited for Sandra in her apartment. He would have to break it off, people were talking, it just wouldn't *do*. After all, he had his position to think about; a junior executive couldn't afford to be discussed by the common lot of office workers. If it went on much longer Father would hear about it, and there would be an awful scene. There must be no hint of scandal attached to the family name. Well, he would see to that.

He heard a key scrape in the lock; Sandra was home. He wiped his wet palms with a handkerchief and tried to make it look as if he'd just casually risen from a chair. Obviously she was surprised to see him.

"Hello, darling. I didn't know you were coming over. Why didn't you phone?" She was carrying a load of groceries, a newspaper, and a large handbag. Fred stood awkwardly while she took the groceries into her small kitchen. She really was awfully pretty; it was a shame. He wondered what was the best way to break it to her gently; he hoped she wouldn't be too upset.

"What a miserable day!" she exclaimed, throwing newspaper and handbag on the couch and taking off her coat. "The library was crowded every minute! I've spent this whole day showing *somebody* where to find the book he wants. Whew! Am I beat!" She kicked off her shoes and wiggled her bare feet in the rug. "How was your day? Work hard?"

"My dear Sandra, I always work hard. You know that. In the kind of responsible position I have—"

"Yes, I know. Do sit down, Fred. You make me nervous standing up and waving your hands like that."

He looked offended. "I was *not* waving my hands."

"Well, all right. But sit down anyway. Would you like a drink?"

He hesitated. A drink would only prolongue the thing. Then again, a little bourbon might help his uneasy stomach. "I'd love one."

She went into the kitchen and he sat down. How on earth was he going to tell her?? He would have to be blunt. It would be cruel at first but kinder in the long run. She must see that he owed it to his family and his position to marry a girl who would be socially acceptable in his upper class society. He told himself that he was probably doing Sandra a favor. Surely she would be uncomfortable in the formal atmosphere he was used to. Imagine Mother taking off her shoes in front of any guests after a day of working with the Red Cross! It did not occur to him that somewhere or other his mother would have to take off her shoes. He had never seen his mother any way but perfectly dressed.

Sandra brought him his drink, and one for herself. "Well! Tell me about your day." She curled up in a chair, tucking her feet under her.

Without meaning to, he started telling her about the irritations and frustrations that he had suffered at the office. ". . . And that damned idiot Taylor seems to think he knows more about architecture than I do!"

"Isn't he the one whose father was an architect and who went to Architectural School?"

"Yes, but I did study architecture at Yale, and of course Father knows more about it than Taylor's father ever did."

"But you're not your father, and who knows? Maybe you could learn something from Mr. Taylor."

"Now Sandra, really!"

"Well, maybe you're right. But just the same, Fred, you're not perfect yet, you know. There's still room for improvement."

He squirmed uneasily. She had never talked to him like this before. One of the things he had always liked about Sandra was that she didn't criticize; she simply listened to him and was sympathetic at the proper time. None of the girls he had grown up with were like that. As a matter of fact he often had the feeling that they were laughing at him behind his back — but of course that was rather ridiculous since he never did anything the least bit funny or out of place. No doubt he was imagining things.

"Fred, you're not listening!"

He came back with a jerk. "I'm sorry, Sandra, really I am — It's been a hard day. What were you saying?"

"It doesn't matter. Why don't you stretch out on the couch and let me fix you another drink?" He lay back gratefully and closed his eyes. She really was a marvelous girl. He would miss her. He heard her set the drink down on the table, and then go quietly into the bedroom and shut the door. He lay there, relaxed and content, and thought some more about Sandra. She would make some man a wonderful wife. But suddenly, somehow, he realized that the thought of her as somebody else's wife didn't please him at all. The more he thought about it the more uncomfortable he got. Well, there was no help for it. The only way he could stop it was to marry her himself, and obviously he couldn't do that . . . Or could he? For a moment he toyed with the thought. Sandra would be a warm, sympathetic wife, and they already got along perfectly. But then again, Mother and Father wouldn't approve, and Sandra *would* have a hard time adjusting to their kind of life. Should he give her up, should he make the sacrifice, or should he do the unconventional thing and marry her? The thought of defying his mother and father scared him a little, but it gave him a feeling of adventure too. The main problem was his career; how much of an asset would Sandra be to a man with his position? Fred was confused. For the first time in his life he was considering not doing the Proper Thing, and there was no one there to help him decide, to guide him as his father did. What was he going to do?

Sandra came back into the room wearing an old pair of bedroom slippers and no make-up — except lipstick, of course. Fred could not bear to see any woman without lipstick. He sat up and lit a cigarette nervously. By this time he had no idea what he wanted to say. Sandra saved him the trouble.

"Fred, I'm glad you came; I've been wanting to talk to you."

"Talk to me? What about? He was on guard instantly. She wouldn't, she couldn't be about to suggest that they get married! He wished to Heaven he'd written her a letter or phoned instead of coming over.

"You know how fond I am of you, —"

"Well, I'm fond of you too, Sandra. I —"

"But . . . well, listen Fred. I don't think we ought to see each other any more. Now don't get mad — I like you, really I do, and we've had lots of fun — only — I just think it's time to quit, that's all."

He didn't believe it. She couldn't be saying this. *She* couldn't be wanting to break it off! "But Sandra — have I done something you didn't like?? I had no idea you were thinking this crazy way!"

"I'm not thinking in any crazy way! Oh, come on Fred, let's face it, we've got no future, and — well, if you must know I've been seeing pretty much of another guy and he wants to get engaged."

"Have you told him about me? You know he might not approve —"

"Yes, I told him."

Fred put out his cigarette carefully and stood up, tall and noble. He went to Sandra and took her hands tenderly. Sandra, will you just listen to me for a moment? Come sit down."

"All right." They sat down on the couch and he put his arm around her.

"I have something very important to ask you, that's why I came over today — to surprise you. Sandra — I want you to marry me." He expected her to fling her arms around him, as she did when she was excited, but she sat very still. He blundered on — "I know it might be difficult at first, to adjust I mean, but I'll help you and after a time you'll get used to it."

"Used to what?"

"Well — you know — formality, servants — all that sort of thing. But I know we can work it out all right." She didn't say anything and he assumed she was too happy to speak. He tightened his arm around her. "We can be married as soon as you like."

She pulled away a little, to look at him. "Fred, I — I don't know what to say. I never thought you'd *propose* to me!"

He laughed. "I'm glad I surprised you. We can have a small quiet wedding with just family — say next week, and —"

"But Fred," she interrupted, "I can't marry you!"

"WHAT? Now, don't be silly, Sandra — if it's Mother and Father or the Family you're afraid of —"

"You don't understand," she said patiently. "I'm not afraid of anybody, I just can't marry you."

"But why on earth not??" He tried to control his temper, tried to be understanding. He must make her see that it would be all right. They would be very happy, he was sure of it.

"I can't marry you because I don't love you." This time it was Fred who looked stunned. Didn't love him — but of course she loved him! She was being noble, that was it; she was afraid she would be a hindrance on his career. Dear, sweet Sandra, always worrying about him.

"Fred, listen to me and try to understand. I like you a lot, I'm very fond of you, but I don't love you and I never have. If I'd ever thought that you were

falling in love with me — but I didn't, I thought that we were good friends and that was the end of it. Oh please — don't look so upset!"

Upset!" he shouted. "I'm *certainly* not upset!" He jerked his arm away and stood up, straightening his coat. "Go ahead and marry your ditch-digger or office boy or whatever he is. I'm sure you'll be quite happy cooking your little dinners and scrubbing floors. You probably wouldn't appreciate what I could give you anyway!"

"No," she said quietly, "I probably wouldn't, you're right. The things I like best you don't know how to give, and I might get lonely playing with my pretty toys in a big empty room. But I guess you never noticed empty rooms — you had too many toys." She stood up too and held out her hand. "Goodbye, Fred. I feel — honored — that you asked me. And I'm sorry."

He ignored her hand and left, slamming the door like a small boy mad at his mother. I'll go to the Club, he thought on the way downstairs, and if that nice Meredith girl is there I'll take her out dancing after dinner. She likes me, I can tell by the way she looks at me. And she knows the advantages of Our Kind of Life. Poor Sandra, I feel sorry for her.

What on earth did she mean about all that gibberish about toys??

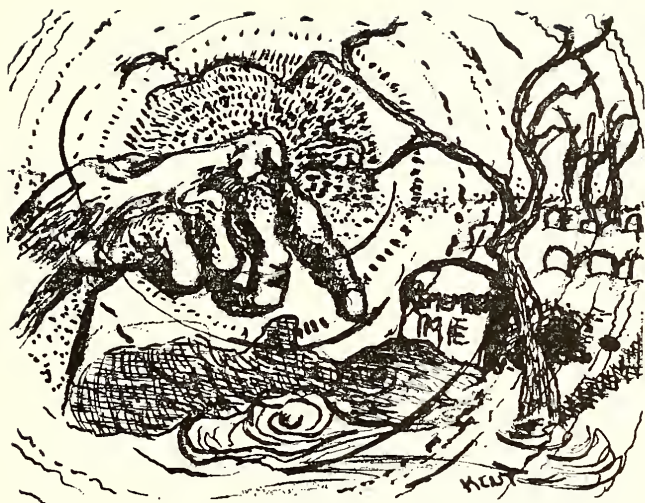
ELIZABETH FEW

Memory

THE air is thick and pungent
with the smells of my childhood.
The tickle of the summer sun
returns me
to days that were too short,
days that were too long.

I hear rushes of whispering leaves,
death-rattle of rhododendron.
I see the churning waves
suck sand from under my feet.
I splash in running rains
taste the sky.

I was young,
I was free,
to hear
to see,
to splash.



ANNE DUGUID

ELEGY

HE sun cam' archin o'er a blear warld begrutten
makin' the dubs her keekin' glass—the day, seep-sabbin'
slowly shauchled by—stirrit that he had died
a'thin' wæfu'—Life the toom tabard no.
But in the glaur the watergaw—he kent we cared.

Eternally Recurrent Second Thoughts of Students

I

"Prodooce, Prodooce!"

Now I'm going to read a paper
My paper, my paper,
I wrote it all by midnight oil,
My paper, my paper,
If they don't give me an A
I'm going to quit.

No matter how lousy it may be,
My paper, my paper,
If I worked on it I think it's good,
My paper, my paper,
If it doesn't get a big fat A
I'm going to quit—

"Gray was enchanted by the Alps"
Says my paper, my paper,
Tracing the lyric from Beowulf,
My paper, my paper,
With special reference to Deor
With trends and outlooks made so clear
If they don't appreciate the work I did
If they don't give me a big fat A
I'm going to quit . . .

II

Have a Laurel

How doth the little PHR
improve each shining hour
By sitting through her seminar
as clouds of lightness lour.

○ in our grot
light is not,
But pink light is;
chiz, chiz.

III

Vaunt

I am a true-blue scholar
I don't read poems; I count letters.
Don't like poems
Can't understand them.
Words are better
When isolated.
Stick 'em together,
You get into trouble,
Get all mixed up
Lose count.
I am a true-blue scholar
I don't have ideas; I make indexes

I compare text.
Can't understand
Without an index,
Makes words fit,
Puts 'em in line.

Organize

1 2 3

1 2 3

IV

The Peterloo Massacre
Is very important
To English literature

It really impressed
All sorts of poets
Made them romantic

Oh—history, history
Love that approach by history!
Here I go again—I, 2, 3,
Learning my poems by history.

Nature to Pope
Was ordered and clear,
Subjected to his ordered mind.
Nature to Col.
Was one big mess
But taught him love of human kind.

Oh—history, history
Love that approach by history!
Here I go again—123,
Learning my poems by history.

The industrial revolution
Brought many fears
To uncertain poets

A hair shirt worn
Next to fair white skin
Describes a poem

Oh—history, history
Defines all the mystery,
The sons of Ben
Are at it again—

V

"The sequence tells us no story; however it is full of symbolism."

Sweetest Shakespere, Fancy's child,
warbled his native word-notes wild,
but in these woods are none but birds
anud they speak but Grawk.
(They are ravin')

VI

Death is a universal subject
It's very close to everyone.

VII

"Lament" and Hubris

My soul is an enchanted boat
Floats around like Ivory soap,
Climbs up to my lady's bower
(We'll leave out this line, just to be safe . . .)

Bang . . . my dream is quick A'busted
Teacher called on me again . . .

Oh—sometimes when I'm all alone and tired
Then I really like this English literature,
But in class my brain gets in the mire,
Not because I come hating the poems
But because they get knocked out of me.
Sometimes I wish a teacher would ask me something
That I couldn't answer in five seconds,
Something I'd really get confused about,
Something I couldn't look up right away—
But then they'd think they weren't really teaching
And that I was a weedy stoopid dope—

Oh well, my soul sinks down again
Falls into its weedy fen
Fie on all thy stinky poems
(Better not print this line neither)

VIII

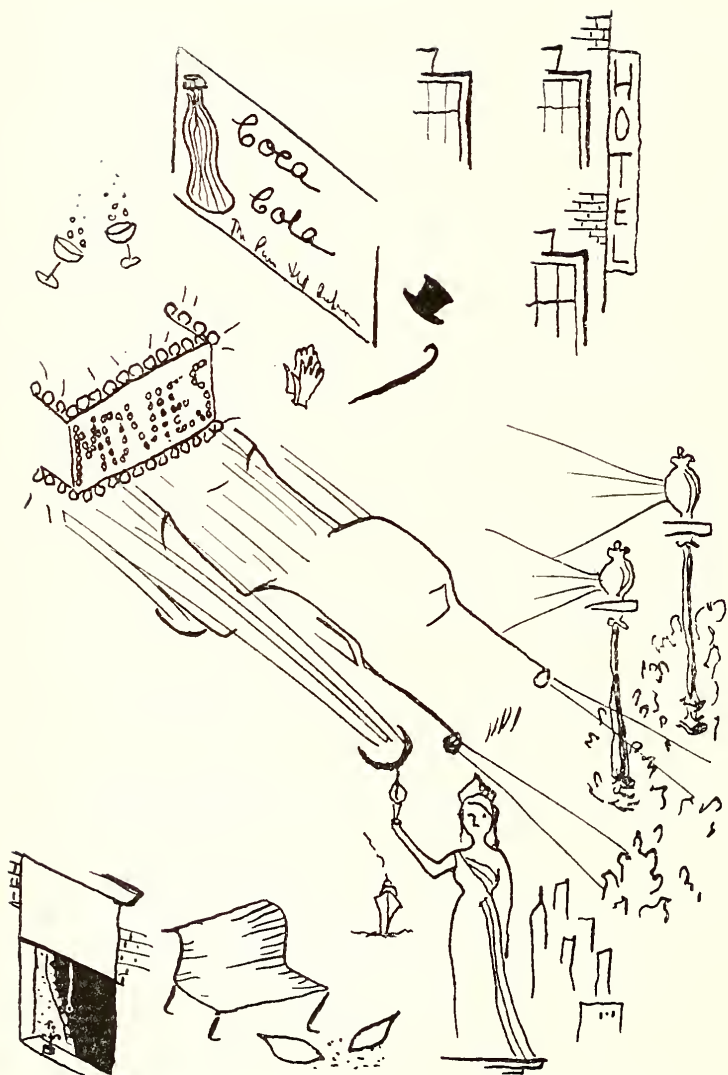
"Irksome noise have cloy'd your ears, and corrosived
your hearts."—Webster.

"Things that stir the spleen and stay the brain."—Sidney.
This applies, anyhow.

X

Sing, Ariel, sing,
(sweetly out of the wandering wood)
of hacked poems and hack professors,
of wanhope and waymenting.

"a double sorrow is it to remember passed joy in present woe,"
yet love doth chant it.
Unanxious one, sing.



LUCY MARTIN

City Thoughts

It is the quiet moment before birds sing.

A siren cuts through the distance
and he shifts uneasily in sleep.

The street lamp shimmers through the moving curtain.
Sticky sheets and pricks of feather clutch my body.
I turn and hear the tick of aqua hands.

Toss,
Wipe the face's sweat.
Patterned lights swerve across the ceiling.
Arcs of sickly yellow—not stars.

Reach for the moon . . . grasp neon.
Look for the sky . . . see steel.

Here the sky is always blinking, yelling, selling:
"Close out, buy now."
"Just a dime, buddy."
"Move to the rear, please."

To run, naked in the streets, is liquid pleasure.
Go fast, fast
past snoring drunks,
past animal heat of houses,
touching only cool pavement
till it turns
to
mist.

The lamp is out.
Stench of early morning rises from the city.
Watery dreams recede to peeling plaster.
His hand, warm and gentle, feels for mine.

ANSWER TO THE SOVIET

THERE is considerable difference between *Russian Writing* by Alexander Chakovsky *The Saturday Review* and *Words, Words* from *The New Yorker*. *The New Yorker* article reeks of sarcasm; *The Saturday Review* article just reeks.

It isn't the lies in the Soviet article that are so objectionable, it is the way in which they are presented. No fairly intelligent individual likes having it presupposed that his mind is a sponge! Obviously nothing else could possibly soak up all Chakovsky's propaganda.

Naturally, says Chakovsky, some books describing the life of people, social conflicts and peoples' efforts to create a better future are more readily printed by Soviet publishing houses than others, however, he neglects to mention that the majority of American novels printed in Russia give the worst possible impression of American social, economic and political standards. The Ugly American is pictured as an immoral fascist-beast wallowing in Faulkner's filth, Steinbeck's slime and Caldwell's chaos. Steinbeck's characters certainly do typify the American family! The Snopes' reign! And Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea* is sold as a children's book. Obviously these novels are well edited in the Soviet.

Where *The New Yorker* may be subtle, the S. R. article cannot. It is very difficult to tell a bare faced lie in a subtle manner. Where *The New Yorker* can make specific, derogatory remarks about specific novels, the Soviet Editor rants, raves and makes gross generalizations which are economy-sized lies from first to last.

Most of the time Chakovsky isn't even polite. His maligning remarks which are so sweetly scribed in the interests of international understanding are far more insulting than any critical remarks in the article, *Words, Words*. The following quotation is hereby nominated for the laugh of the week award:

I personally do not think this is the best way of getting to know the life of another people—by selecting books mainly directed at criticizing shortcomings.

Then why do Soviet editions edit books so that the shortcomings become the overall picture?

The most startling contrast between these two articles is the utter lack of humor in the *Saturday Review* and the subtle light humor in *The New Yorker*. Perhaps it is true that free, you can be subtle; fettered, you obviously must be sneaky. The Communist language is boring in comparison to the clever script of *The New Yorker* editors. The Communist article is too corny, too melodramatic, too distorted to be effective. The Communist Editor ends with the comments that "we are not statesmen." Thank God!

GOODBYE! GOODBYE! GOODBYE!

AND still it comes, and I have gone beyond.
Children run among the gaudy leaves,
Are flung as though by wind and cannot stop.
Wind is nothing, a coat of empty sleeves.

Bones rattle like windows in the house of a whistling window.
Hair flies like moments of happiness the wind uncombs.
Flags crackle, leaves embark, skirts raise themselves in lust.
Sky blows away, the sea grows dark and ill.

And still it comes, and I have gone beyond.
Old men poke into a soil that blows,
Driven by a wind of scattering seasons.
Wind is nothing, plants them all in rows.

Nerves rattle and ring like an eight party telephone line.
Castanets clatter like chattering teeth in Haiti.
Ships sink, planes crash, eyes click and tick in a blink.
Skin is a bag of agues, airs and chills.

And still it comes, and I have gone beyond.
Children run into the furrowed sky,
Blown by a hullabaloo that cannot stop.
Wind is nothing. Goodbye! Goodbye! Goodbye!

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THE BRAMBLER



SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

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Cover	Ann Percy
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EDITORIAL

FOR THE past two or three years there has not been much student interest in THE BRAMBLER. We find this odd, since there could not be a more appropriate place for the expression of all kinds of prejudices and opinions. The Freshmen have always been especially shy about submitting their work. Therefore we have decided to start something really new. A FRESHMAN CONTEST will be run for our Christmas issue. There will be a first prize of \$15 for the best short story and the best poem, and a second prize of \$5 in each category, and some Honorable Mentions may be published as well as the winners. All entries must be submitted to the Editor by December first. We hope that ALL Freshmen will be interested.

—K.G.

Jean Boley Prize Short Story

by PENNY HARRISON

A SILLY QUARREL

IT WAS six o'clock, nearly supper time, and Timmy wasn't home yet. Mrs. Gray was restless; she kept moving around the room, picking up the magazines on the table, rearranging the flowers, plumping up the sofa cushions. He should have been home hours ago. He had no right to walk out on her like that—after all, I *am* his mother. I shouldn't have gotten mad at him, I should have just said we'll talk about it later. He's eighteen; I can't keep treating him like a ten-year-old. She knew it was the hardest thing in the world for a mother to realize that her child is growing up. She knew what she was doing wrong, and all the time she was doing it, all the time she was telling him what to wear and not to drive too fast, and for Heaven's sake, Timmy, wipe your feet when you come in the door—all the time she'd tell herself to be quiet, and she could hear her own voice scolding him. No wonder he'd left. I don't *mean* to say those things! I say them and then I'm always sorry, but I don't know how to say I'm sorry. If I didn't love him so much maybe I could talk to him. It's so easy to say what you mean to people you don't care about. . . .

It's such a silly thing to fight about anyway. I don't *really* care what school he goes to, they're both good universities. Oh . . . I'm fibbing, of course I care. State is closer to home—I could see him more often. You'd think he'd take that into consideration. It's lonely, being a widow. . . .

She went over to the window and looked out again. A large cat walked proudly down the middle of the street, but no green Chevrolet came along to threaten it. I hate cats, she thought, I hate the way they look so—so satisfied with life! They don't know any better. I wish I didn't know any better—I wish I didn't always have to be doing things I didn't like, then I'd be satisfied too. If I could play bridge whenever I wanted, if I could read more of those good mystery novels instead of working at the Bank all week—I get so tired of looking at money when I don't have any! It isn't fair!

Where was he? Suppose something had happened to him? Oh, don't be ridiculous, he's old enough to take care of himself. But that's not the point, a lot of things happen to people who are old enough to take care of themselves. What would I do if he just never came home? Oh Lord, what would I do if—

Now stop it. Stop it. He's all right, I know he's all right. There's no point in worrying when you can't do anything about it. I could do something about it, I could call his friends, I could call the police. Yes, and if he's all right he'll be even madder than he is now. I'll wait till seven o'clock, she decided. If he's not home by then I'll start calling.

Seven o'clock. Fifty minutes away. How could she sit still for fifty minutes? Suddenly the phone rang. It was the loudest noise she had ever heard. It was Timmy, she knew it was Timmy—it had to be Timmy! She ran to it.

"Virginia? This is Gwen. Listen, I just wanted to know what time you wanted to play bridge tomorrow. What about two-ish? I know you like to be home when Tim gets back from practice, and I thought—"

"Two would be fine. I'll pick you up a little before," she said, her stomach feeling queer.

"Virginia—is anything wrong? I mean—can I—?"

"No," she said. "Nothing's wrong, I'll see you tomorrow."

She hung up the phone slowly. Oh—damn him, why was he so thoughtless? Why didn't he call or something—why didn't he come home? He should have known I didn't mean those things I said. Worse than the anger and the helplessness she felt, worse even than the uneasiness, was the shame. She shouldn't have mentioned her health; she shouldn't have held that over him as a kind of punishment. But my heart really isn't strong, she thought. I might have an attack any day—and what if he weren't here—what if I were alone, I might die alone. She shivered. I won't think about it. If I don't go over to the window he'll come sooner—maybe his car is coming around the corner right now. I don't hear any car. It's so quiet outside!

Sixt thirty. We always eat at six thirty. I'll go start supper then I won't have to listen to all this quiet. By the time supper's ready he'll be here—surely he'll be here! He left at two o'clock, he's bound to be back soon.

As she started toward the kitchen she heard a car stop outside and then the slam of a car-door. He's home, she thought, oh, thank God he's home! Suddenly she was furious at him for making her go through all that agonizing. How could he have been so selfish? He *knows* how I worry! I could wring his neck! Before she had time to think of what she was going to say, the door opened and Timmy came in. He closed the door quietly; She waited for him to explain, to apologize, but he just stood there and finally she couldn't stand it any longer.

"Timmy, where have you been?! I got so worried—"

"I'm sorry you worried. You should've known I'd be okay." He took off his jacket and hung it in the closet. "Is supper ready?"

"Supper—? Is that all you can say? No, of course supper isn't ready! I've been waiting for *you*! I want to know where you've been and what you've been doing. Answer me!"

"Mom, we always eat at six-thirty. I knew that. Can't you even give me credit for knowing when to come home for meals?"

"Timmy—You've been very thoughtless. You stormed out of here in a perfect rage—now don't argue, I could tell that you were mad—and you've been gone all this time without letting me know a word about where you were. And all because of a silly argument—"

"It wasn't a silly argument. A guy's college has something to do with what the rest of his life'll be. You wanted me to go to State—"

"It's a fine university! Your father—"

"Yeah, I know Dad went there and all that. And after State you would've persuaded me to go to Law School, and I'd have ended up as a good lawyer—just like my dad. Can't you see that I don't *want* to be a lawyer? I want to study history and I want to teach school someday. Mom—"

"You're too young to know what you want! Now listen, Timmy, I'm not going to discuss it any further. We've said enough for one day; we can talk about it next week if you like. I'll go and start supper; why don't you wash up?"

"Mom—don't you want to know where I've been?"

She'd nearly forgotten about it. "Yes, I certainly do! If you *knew* what I've been through—" she began.

"Well, it hasn't been fun for me either."

"Oh Timmy, I know!" she said, and forgave him. "I'm sorry I got so mad, really I am. Let's just forget it; we won't ever mention it again."

"We can't just forget it, Mom—I wish we could." He looked at her miserably. "Do you know where I've been for the last two hours?—with Sam Gregg, at a bar."

"At a bar! That's just like Sam! How many times have I told you not to see that man? He's irresponsible, he's selfish—he even had the nerve to tell me how to raise you! I don't care if he was your father's best friend, you stay away from him! A bar!"

"I called him to meet me there. I was already there, Mom."

"Timmy, what's the matter? You've never acted this way before. You're—different, somehow. Strange. I don't like it. What else have you been doing this afternoon?"

He stuck his hands in his pockets. He looked scared and very young and she thought how much she loved him and how no matter what he'd done or said she'd forgive him. I won't be petty, she thought, and I won't scold him. Whatever it is, we'll forget the whole thing.

"Mom—I've joined the army. I report to Fort Bragg a week from tomorrow."

She looked at him stupidly, not understanding. "What?"

"I said I've joined the army. I leave a week from tomorrow. I talked to Sam after I'd done it—he thinks I'll be okay. He said I'd sort of rushed into it, and that maybe I should've waited, but—well. . . ."

She grasped at the one thing she could understand. "Sam! It was Sam that talked you into this. He's always wanted to take you away from me—and I wouldn't let him—he's hated me—"

"He doesn't hate you! Mother, *I* did the thing, I didn't call Sam 'till after I'd done it. It's not his fault, he didn't have anything to do with it."

"I'll get you out of it—don't worry—your father used to know some general . . . what *was* his name—? She hurried towards the desk; the address would be somewhere in the left drawer. . . .

"Mother," he said quietly, "forget it. It doesn't matter."

"Doesn't matter!" She turned around. "Of course it matters, what are you talking about? Timmy, you did something very foolish, but we all make mistakes. I don't want you to suffer for the rest of your life because of a silly

quarrel; this afternoon has been punishment enough. Now I'll get in touch with that general whatever-his-name-is and we'll fix it somehow."

"Don't be silly, Mom, you can't get it fixed, I signed up and I'm in. And besides, I don't want it fixed. Damn it, Mother you've missed the whole point, haven't you?"

"Timothy! Don't you swear at me!"

He sighed. It was a small, patient sound. She watched him in bewilderment thinking, he's gotten taller and I hadn't even noticed, he's almost outgrown that shirt; I'll have to buy him a new one, I think a blue madras would be nice.

"Mom." He took her by the arm and led her over to the sofa. "Sit down and listen to me, will you? I mean really listen. You got to understand why I did it—and why I don't want to get out of it." He sat facing her and tried to find the right words. "You've always told me where to go and what to do—and sometimes even what to think. Well, that was okay when I was little, but I'm not a little boy any more."

"Timmy, all I've ever done was for your good! I want you to have the best, I want you—"

"But that's just it, Mom!" He interrupted. "*You* do the wanting and the deciding. I don't have any say."

"I've been around a lot longer than you have. I know better than you do what's good and what's not good."

"Maybe so, but it's time I learned. A guy's got to make his own life, and if I can't do it here I'll do it somewhere else."

Somewhere else! Suddenly, for the first time since he'd told her, she understood what he'd done. He was leaving her! She couldn't believe it, she wouldn't believe it.

"You can't leave me here by myself! A widow, alone in the house—and—you *know* about my heart."

"Sam said he'd check by every day, and gosh, Mom, it isn't as if we lived way out in the country. You've got neighbors all around. I—I really feel bad about leaving you, but . . . well—a guy does what he has to do. I can finish high school in the army. After I get out I'll know better about college." He looked at her anxiously, and then down at his hands, and there was silence.

She sat absolutely still, and everything she tried to think about was a blur. Finally she stood up.

"It's past supper time, Timmy. Go and wash your hands, and then you can help me set the table. It won't take very long to fix; we're just having leftovers." She left him sitting on the sofa, and on the way to the kitchen she noticed a trace of mud on the rug. "And next time you come in, dear, *please* remember to wipe your feet."

WANDERERS NACHTLIED I

The white sand road goes over the mountain,
 down to the sea gates
 where the ship waits,
the tense pulsing white ship
 waiting.

And here by the road is a pale pink star,
 and over my head
 a blue star shines,
a cold silver blue star
 shining.

Shall I go, shall I stay?
 The silent world
 wheels through unmoved sky,
 pulls at my feet and heart—

Somewhere the sun shines on bright sand and sea star,
 and moonlight falls
 on a nightbird calling—
blackbird, mockingbird, nightingale,
 calling.

KATRINA GROAT

Recollections

IT WAS BRITAIN, it was dark, it was war. Behind every tree along the long, slow hill there waited a man to jump out at me. The trees showed up in the blackness by extra blackness, and at every tree my heart gave an extra beat. I did not tell of the men, but I resolved then and there that I must never walk up that long, long hill in the dark alone. But it was not I now who walked up the hill at night. They always came at bedtime. There would be ten minutes of laboured calm after my light had been switched out, the black-out material taken down from the nursery window, and my mother had creaked her way down my long dark passage. Then the wind would seem to grow louder, the hateful trees would grate together, and they would come back, as every night since I had heard the hushed grown-up voices tell tales of Germans, Huns and Jerries. They were soldiers, I knew, and they were always marching. They were marching now in France, and they would march soon in England too, my mother said. She must not hear them at night, if she did not know that they were already here. For they never marched during the day. I had listened for them early in the morning, when my mind was still paralysed by the happenings of the night. But every night I knew that as soon as I laid my head on the pillow, my ear pressed down in a despairing attempt to keep them away, the relentless marching would begin, and the harder I pressed my head into the pillow the louder and the nearer the marching came, until they must have been right in the room, in my head—Hun, Hun, Hun, Hun,—the word marched round in my head and seemed to be the beating of my heart. As my heart beat faster in panic, the boots quickened their pace, and they would be almost upon me. And I would have to scream. Then I would be moved into the big bed between my parents, where I would be nearly smothered, but at least I was now safe from them.

One day we really knew that the war was over, for my sister and I shared our first stunted banana. We did not like it, for it was soggy and strange, but we pretended to enjoy it for my mother's sake, for she said it was a great treat, and that she had eaten bananas every day before the war. For her it meant that the war had ended and we realized in our own way that we must eat it in solemnity and reverence.

Two years later found me in a tiny unknown and forgotten village in France, again pretending, this time not merely for domestic peace, but with the weight of international relations upon my eight-year-old shoulders. I can vividly remember those snails in their dirty round shells, the small cruel snail pickers and the way in which those tiny rubber balls did not yield between my teeth. They had been cooked especially for '*la 'tite Anglaise*' and I had now to put on a show of relish as I ate two snails, if by eating I can mean putting those snails gingerly into my mouth. For they travelled no further than that, and one in each cheek I can remember thanking '*monsieur le maire*' for his treat—and I was mercifully

released from the village tavern and its unshaven men, who smiled at me for the first time and seemed to think me funny now though they had never noticed me before. I could not stop to wonder why, for I had to escape so that those two snails could be returned to their original home, the gutter. I was sorry they had had to die to no end, and it did not bear thinking that they had been cooked alive. For that was how they did the cooking in France. One day as I was having my bath in the kitchen I had watched '*la grand' mere*' forcing a wriggling, struggling eel into a boiling pot on the stove, and from that time on all my days seemed to be overshadowed by the death of animals. '*La grand 'mère*' would often be sitting in the playground and I would watch her strangle and skin the little furry rabbits who had that very morning been playing so happily in their run, and she would have a look of pleasure on her yellow face and greed in her knotted hands. I watched only because I was unable not to watch. But then I would run off with my friends. One boy was less tough and less blood-thirsty than the others, and we had a tacit friendship. His name was Nounours. On Thursdays we did not play together for he did not come with the other boys in the evenings to watch the pigs and the cows being killed in the slaughter-house. The heat and the violent desperation in the movement as the pigs were hung up by their hind legs, and the brilliance and force of the jet of blood from their slit throats and the screams of the pigs and cheers of the boys and the rough orders of the bloody slaughter men, all were an attraction I could not miss. Then the pathetic jerking and twitching of the pigs, or was it just meat hanging there? This brought me into the sphere of the terrible deeds I heard related in the village of the '*Boches*,' I knew now, come to England, save in the drumming of my ears. Here they were known, here they had worked. Worked—I discovered little by little from my school friends—meant killing, and they had taken many young men, the brothers of my friends, up into the hills where they had been martyred for their country.

One day was very solemn. I had been prepared for it by '*monsieur le maire*' who had told me of its great importance. I did not understand all he told me in his wine-smelling French about the three martyred men, but I knew instinctively that they were going to martyr someone, like they did in the Bible. I knew too that this new martyr would be me, for I was an enemy, for indeed some of the children at school called me '*Boche*' because I spoke a different language from theirs when I first arrived at the school. I said my prayers the night before the ceremony and determined to be brave, for martyrs were always brave. The next day I was dressed up in my heavy hot kilt and I knew that this finery was a part of the dignity of the sacrifice. The whole village was astir and we eventually set out in a long procession up and up and up past the ghoulis crucifixes at every corner. It was a rough stony track and I wondered why I was not carrying my cross as Jesus did in the Bible. The men went first, and then all dressed in black, their sabots grating and grinding on the rough stones, came the women, so many more women than men. I had heard that some had had five or seven sons killed by '*les sales Boches*', and their husbands too. I tried to imagine my mother in the garden at home, and knew that she too would talk like the women in black about her daughter, who was killed in France, martyred in France, and I could hardly take another step in the heat and terror, yet I went marching on and on and on. I noticed that some of the black shuffling figures carried wreaths of

green and purple, and the solemn and cruel faces peered out from their thick black veils. Like greedy crows they were marching me to my death, and there was now no escape. The vines were too open for me to hide there, and the ditch, though parched, was swarming with flies. I walked on and up in a trance it seems, until the procession reached the spot where the three young men had been tortured, killed, martyred. There was a shrine, and all the solemn people stopped. I looked around for the knife, like the knife which made the line along the pigs' throats, the line which would open like a mouth and gush forth the warm orange blood, and I screamed. Quickly I was hustled away by the cruel 'grand 'mere' whilst 'monsieur le curé' said a prayer, and the wreaths were laid on the shrine, and the black crows crossed themselves, and the long march began down the scrunchy track to the tiny village, the poor blessed village I had not expected to see again. That scream had saved my life, perhaps I had been deemed unworthy of sacrifice after that, and now that I had faced death I no longer felt the fascination at the killing of the pigs, of the eels, of the snails, and I played with Nounours on a Thursday night and did not scream again.

The Symbolist

Grew by the stretched
Length of an arm
Just high enough to pluck
The billowed net of sky
Away and scattered to the wind
Feathered seeds of l'ideal
In one
Infinite
Expansion
Of perfect
Disarray.

SUSAN RUSMISEL

THE WEEKEND

SHE SAT on the edge of his bed and watched him pack. He pulled everything out of the closet and took all of his shirts from the big dresser. He was behaving very badly—they both knew it, and he, sensing her growing irritation, exaggerated his actions with crude, dramatic flourishes.

"Which shirts?" he asked—bowing low from the waist, his heels clicking smartly. "And how many does my little debutante think I'll need?"

"God-damn it, Michael—they're your shirts—take whichever ones you want—it really doesn't make any difference. But, please, we've got to get going—I told Aunt Lauria we'd be there early this afternoon, and we don't have much time."

He pulled out two ties—each clashing violently with the other—separately vying for a medal in bad taste.

"Good God," she thought, "does he really like them?" Aloud she said: "Couldn't you wear your club tie? I mean, really, those seem a little bright."

"Ah Ha!" he shouted—making a great effort to look crushed. "You *do* care what I wear! You're ashamed of me!" In spite of himself, he revealed great delight at his victory.

"Oh, wear whatever you like."—"Maybe I shouldn't have said that," she thought, genuinely afraid that he was serious. She pictured her aunt and Uncle Alex staring at one of those ties—they weren't going to like him anyway, but if he were going to look like a labor agitator, or Al Capone—she knew they wouldn't even pretend to like him.

She looked at him, and smiled. 'How he was loving making fun of her.' He was leaping around the room—his forehead in deep and very forced furrows—his hair falling in his eyes—she knew he hadn't gotten a hair cut on purpose. 'Damn.' This might be funny now, but he had no idea how her family's coldness could hurt her. Even then she felt the warm, sweet ripples of nausea run through her, pushing all reality aside, invading even the privacy of her secret mind, filling the corners of that hidden inner circle. 'I should be immune to it by now—the way they used to roast Matthew everytime he walked in to the house—and whenever he came for dinner they had a regular old heyday. I should have remembered—but I forget so easily—Michael should be kept away from them—I should have learned my lesson long ago.' She wasn't being honest with herself, and finally had to admit it. She had to admit that she would be the only one hurt that night—only she would suffer. He was going to love it. She could see him at the table saying outrageous things and laughing to himself, or perhaps out loud—watching everything—treating the whole thing like a tremendous joke.

"We dress for dinner, Michael. You do have a dinner jacket here don't you?"

"Of course I do. I have to have one. The Society for the Advancement of Pornography requires it."

"Can't you be serious for one small minute? And do you have to be so childishly crude—besides I doubt if you know what pornography is."

"Do *you*? You know I never was too sure about it. I think the Society is some sort of an Art group—really they pass around the most amazing pictures."

"This is getting us no where," she almost laughed. "Look—just throw the stuff in the suitcase, and let's get started. It'll take us an hour and a half to get there, and I don't want to be late."

"No, of course not," he said with mock distaste. "That would be the very height of indcretion. Well, I'm almost ready, I'll just throw in my lederhosen and we'll be off."

During the ride from the city, they were silent most of the way. It was an easy drive—the road was a straight four-laned highway, and that afternoon, the traffic was unusually light. In the stillness, with only the hum of the fast Italian motor—the car was hers—she let her thoughts fly. What would they really think? Aunt Lauria had asked a lot of questions about him—making no attempt to hide behind subtlety—what was he like—was he a beatnik—would she and Uncle Alex enjoy his company—to what club did he belong—what did his father do? She answered these questions, apparently adequately, and the responses she gave must have passed. What was this? Why, suddenly did her aunt seem so narrow, so superficial? Those were the first questions *she* had asked—from habit, or did she really have to know? Was it just a matter of form—like asking the gangly Prep school boys where they went to school, what courses they took, and what sports they liked? No, it wasn't that—she couldn't fool herself that far—The simple truth was the answers to those questions *were* important. Those were the basic requirements. But for what?

She looked at him—he too, seemed deep in thought. His mouth was turned down at one corner, giving in to the heaviness of his pipe. How neat he looks, she thought. And she didn't like it. It seemed very wrong to see him cornered and washed and combed. He had the uncomfortable look of an eight year old boy who had been dragged by one grubby arm from a tree, and scrubbed until he looked 'oh so nice.' He was driving very fast—was he anxious to get there or simply to get it over with? Never had they seemed so far apart—the teasing had been better than this strained silence. Say something—she had the horrible feeling which comes sometimes—the feeling that if she started to speak her voice would sound funny, all choked or high, and whatever she said would come out twisted and stupid. Perhaps, she decided, it would be best to keep quiet, he'd have to speak pretty soon, if only to ask directions.

They arrived at her home at three. She felt herself stiffen as they turned down the driveway—no escape now, they were committed. She stifled a cry—not committed, no, nothing can touch me . . . But suddenly they saw the house, and at the sight of the long, stretched out villa, all pink in the sea-misty air, with its many balconies, and the pots of geraniums—she felt reassured. She loved the house, more than any material thing she had ever known. When they had first brought her here, that summer when she had been six, and confused, and lonely, the house had seemed like a castle, a magic place where tears, and hollow words of a sorrow which she could neither feel, nor understand, could never enter. And each time she saw the house, all the wonderful, sandy days came back, and she felt as if she had never changed. As if innocence still held her hand, and as if all the joy and laughter had never stopped. The house was hers alone—she had told few people how she felt—only those whom she thought

could understand, and there had been very few. She touched his arm, and said "Look." And she was sure that he must have heard her say all that she felt. 'Look at this house—this is me, and you must see and love us, for together we are all things good and fine.'

He looked up at the house quickly, but the driveway was windy, and he looked but did not see. 'No,' she thought. 'No—you must see us—this is why I have brought you here—This is what you must see—This is what I really am—Oh, Christ! Please look!'

FALL

Crisp crunch of brittle burnished gold
In eddying drifts,
The acrid woodsmoke smells,
The rows of greasy apples
And the tunker amber evening feeling,
As winter elbows in her way
Imperceptibly
Until we start and know
That the least felt
Season
Has died her death another year
Unmourned, shortlived and quietly.

by BARBARA BEURY

A SYMBOLIC WINK

LOOK at David smile, you'd think this was his apartment, rather than ours, and Robert and Nanny were visiting us. He does fit right in with the used furniture and playpen. I can see him now sitting on that sunken couch with his shoes off and his feet on the coffee table. Not a care in the world, he'd never worry about who was going to give the baby its 6 a. m. bottle or if we could pay the grocery bill. Obviously he brought me up here to meet his young married friends so I'd change my mind about marrying him. I bet he didn't realize it would have an opposite effect on me.

Nanny must have been about the same age that I was yet she looked so much older. I guessed that was what happened when you got married. Each year after the first must be counted like a dog's, about seven to one of every normal, unmarried human being's. She had on a sweater that looked like a remnant of her high school days. It was all nubby and had a dark stain on the shoulder about the place a baby's head must rest when he was burped. Her skirt, a herring-bone tweed had held up well, but had become loose and baggy probably from a steady diet of "weiner casserole a la budget." She was bare-legged and had on beat up brown loafers that would have made any college student proud to say they had cultivated, but I was sure she hadn't given them any special treatment to get a collegiate look. I glanced down at my pointed toed shoes that matched the blue Mr. Mort I had on and felt rather over-dressed and self-conscious. Of course she hadn't known we were coming by but I wondered if it would have made any difference. If she had known, would she have put on a stunning Dior creation? I doubted it. Nanny's staring at me, she must have asked me something.

"I'm sorry I was looking around at the cute way your apartment is decorated and didn't hear you."

"I asked where you worked."

"At Sloan's Department Store. I'm in the window decorating department."

"That really sounds like fascinating work, Joan, do you plan to continue there?"

"Yes, of course since I just graduated from college last year I have a long way to go, but I hope someday to be head of all the store's decorations."

I could see David scowling at me from across the tiny living room. Perhaps I better change the subject.

"How old did you say your baby was?"

"Mark is a year and a half, and we're expecting another in September. We can't really afford it since Robert is going to Law School and only working part time, but we just decided we'd go ahead and get our family started while we were young enough to enjoy them."

"Do you think with two children you'll have any trouble getting a baby-sitter around here when you want to go out?" I asked. It was a rather stupid

question but I didn't know much of anything else to say. Babies and other domestic problems were not in my line and I did want to know.

Nanny was laughing and Robert looked at her questioningly, obviously wondering, as I was, what had amused her so much.

"Honey, Joan just asked if with two children we'd have any trouble getting a baby-sitter when we wanted to go out. Do you think I should disillusion her?"

He smiled and said she might as well explain the facts of married life to me now. By this time I was feeling rather foolish and naive. Nanny must have noticed that my face was slowly getting red because she said:

"It was rude of us to laugh Joan, but it's sort of a private joke between Robert and me. You see with only one baby we've only been out together twice since September. Once to the movies and the other time to his law fraternity Christmas party. In fact New Year's Eve we just stayed here and played Monopoly."

She and Robert were grinning at each other as if she had just told me they had flown to Paris to spend New Year's. I could certainly see nothing cute or even fun about staying home every night. To be truthful I found the thought rather depressing. My married life was definitely not going to be spent playing Monopoly or even Scrabble for that matter. Some women did become stay-at-homes when they got married, but I wouldn't. My brain was working so fast that I couldn't stop myself from thinking aloud and asking,

"Don't you ever even want to go out?"

"Of course, but we just can't afford it and if we went out more often I'd feel so guilty about the money we were spending I'm sure I wouldn't enjoy it. The way things are now when we do go out we have twice as much fun because it seems like a celebration, a birthday or anniversary."

Although Nanny's explanation seemed logical I was understanding less and less.

David and Robert were sitting on the couch and you could certainly guess which one was married. David was pretty heavy and had on a goodlooking tweed sport jacket while Robert in his old Army fatigue pants and a tee shirt looked like an ex-prisoner of war. His clothes, like Nanny's, just sort of hung from the shoulders and the worry wrinkles between his eye brows divided them like the English Channel. His hair was receding further back on his head and I guessed by the time he was thirty it would probably have receded clear back to where his head joined his neck. But at least he'd have the consolation of no more \$1.50 hair cuts. David had a full crop of blond hair and the only wrinkles he had were around his mouth from laughing at those jokes men persistently tell huddled in corners at cocktail parties or at the local pub over beer. Maybe married life would be good for him, it might make him more serious about life and certainly would take off some of that beer roll around his middle. He was so easy going about everything. If he heard that the world was ending tomorrow his only reaction would probably be a comment like "pity" or "Gee, I hadn't counted on that but let's go out for dinner anyway." I couldn't decide if that was a good trait or not. It would be a help for me in emergencies because I was one of those people who would be the first one trampled trying to get out of the theatre if some joker yelled "fire." But then someone so nonchalant about crises would really irritate a worry-wort like me. Of course, after a few

years of married life some of my traumatic shocks were bound to affect him, he'd change soon enough.

Robert was telling David how yesterday the washing machine had stopped up and had flooded practically the whole apartment. The washer was in the kitchen which was in turn right behind the bedroom, which was behind the living room. In other words the apartment was like a long and narrow hall with one room right in back of the other. If your vision was 20-20 you could sit in the living room and see out the kitchen window. The only room I couldn't account for was the bathroom and thought it must be behind the kitchen. Robert had taken David, who knew a little about mechanics, in to see if he could fix the washer. Probably hoping to save the cost of a union man.

"It really was funny," Nancy said. "I had put in a huge load of laundry and had come to clean the living room. Mark was playing in his bed and a little later when I heard him gurgling extra loudly, I turned to go see what he wanted. There was the water, clothes and all, bubbling over the top and a small river was flowing in through the bedroom towards me. So I spent the rest of the day mopping up and then doing the whole laundry by hand. Before I could get the thing unplugged the water was even in here. The bathroom was the only dry spot in the whole apartment, it being behind the kitchen."

So I was right, about the location of the bathroom that is. What an apartment. They had no more privacy than mannequins in a department store window. Nanny must have been reading my thoughts, because she started talking about the apartment and how awful it was.

"... it's just horrible, but it was all we could get right now. At least within our price range. When we were first married we would stay a week at Robert's house and then a week at mine. It really was awful, we lived out of suitcases the whole time and even though our parents never complained we certainly felt we were inconveniencing them. Then Robert had to go into the Army for six months so I got a job as a receptionist for our family doctor to try and save some money for his education. There it was, our first year being married, and I was living with my parents and he was six hundred miles away. It was what you might call being married by mail. Then when he got back we came here to the University and the only place we could get was the second floor of an old house where a big Italian family lived. There was no door to the second floor so all the noise drifted up the stairs right into our living room. And there was plenty of noise because the grandfather of the clan who lived with the family was deaf so everyone had to scream to him to be heard. I never understood how Robert could study, but it didn't seem to faze him. The worst part of the whole thing was when I got pregnant with Mark, they had all these highly seasoned foods they cooked from morning until night and the smell just made my nausea worse. At about this point I would have moved anywhere, even into a tent to escape those odors. Since then I've never even been able to smell spaghetti cooking without cringing. So you see when we found this apartment we were really thrilled."

Personally, I thought I would have taken the tent, but I didn't tell Nanny that. Instead I began remembering my own neat apartment. Living-dining room, bedroom, kitchenette, and bath, all arranged in a normal design. The furniture was sparse but at least it was new and modern. And the combination

television-hi-fi my parents had given me for Christmas took up enough space so that it just appeared I didn't like that cluttered look. The look this apartment had of being filled to capacity with odds and ends like my grandmother's attic. Here, everything had its place and had to stay there because there was no other spot to put it, all except for the baby's toys which were strung all over the floor and furniture, but then that might be their specified space. This would have been very frustrating to me because I had a phobia for moving things around.

I could see Robert and David coming through the kitchen and tip-toeing around the baby's bed. David, big ex-All American football player David, wasn't watching where he was going and thud, there he was on the floor. He had slipped on one of those wheeled toys the baby had put in its assigned place. Mark, awakened by the noise, began crying and Nanny rushed to pick him up, only to collide with David who was trying to struggle to a standing position. He was making avid apologies for waking the baby, while Robert was telling him how sorry he was he had fallen and at the same time looking to see if David had broken anything.

I just sat there in my overstuffed chair and watched the confusion. Robert and David had finally gotten into the living room and had plopped themselves down on the couch. Mark, had been frightened and was still crying. I could hear Nanny trying to comfort him and make him go back to sleep. His wails got louder but Robert and David didn't seem to hear him, they were so interested in their conversation about pro football. I decided then and there that my husband, if after this experience I lost my head and ever got married, would help me with the baby. After all, why should babies' mothers do all the dirty work, their fathers certainly played a large part in the whole thing, so it was joint responsibility.

Nanny finally ended up bringing Mark into the living room and he was so cute I couldn't control an "ah" when I saw him. He had black, black hair and eyes and a beautiful fair, rosy complexion. Dressed in a green sleeper suit with white rabbits on it he looked just like a cover on "Good Housekeeping."

"Nanny, he is just darling. Do you think he would let me hold him?"

"Oh sure, he loves people, especially women. It's one of Robert's traits he has already picked up." As she said this she handed Mark to me and sat down between David and Robert.

"Hi Mark, did we wake you up?" He rubbed his eyes and grasping one of my fingers with his tiny hand, smiled at me. My heart disintegrated. I put his head on my shoulder and made him comfortable, deciding maybe I was pretty motherly and domestic.

"Be careful Joan," Nanny said, "I wouldn't want him to ruin that lovely dress of yours."

"Oh, that's all right I'm sure he wouldn't do it on purpose."

"I don't know, one evening the lawyer Robert works for stopped by to bring over some legal records and Mark hadn't been put to bed yet so Mr. Wilson, being a grandfather, was dying to hold him. Well, his fatherly venture ended in Mark not only ruining his suit but also breaking his glasses. I was embarrassed because Mr. Wilson has certainly been wonderful to us and even though he said not to worry about it I could see he was a little upset. The funny part

is that after Mark pulls one of his tricks he gets the biggest grin on his face like he knew all along exactly what he was doing, and sometimes I think he does."

I looked down at the devil-in-disguise I held on my lap and he had such an innocent look on his face I couldn't believe these evil deeds his mother had just attributed to him. About this time he reached up one of those tiny hands and grabbed the gold leaf pin that was on my dress. He had a grip that would have made any wrestler a champion.

"No, no Mark don't do that," Nanny said.

Mark smiled at his mother but just kept his hold on my pin. I had to slump forward so it wouldn't rip my dress so he had me in a "hold" where I couldn't do anything. There I sat under the control of a one and a half year old. Finally Robert came to my rescue but not before Mark had succeeded in breaking the clasp on the pin, and snagging my wool dress. Of course I didn't make a scene, but I felt like dumping the fiend on the floor or smacking his hands. Give me children who are heard and not seen! After his little bout the demon in the green sleeper suit was exhausted so he pulled in his horns and laid back in my arms complacently. My "isn't he too cute with his little pranks" act must have been pretty convincing because when I looked up to see if Nanny wanted me to go put him in his bed I saw David smirking at me with a proud contemptuous look that said, "I told you so."

This made me mad and I wanted to stick my tongue out at him like a nasty kid. Maybe the baby was cute, I thought all babies were cute as long as I knew I wasn't the one who had to change their diapers or mix their formulas. And knowing how I like to buy clothes, in fact spent all my salary on clothes, books and records, I just couldn't picture myself in a nubby sweater, baggy skirt and run down loafers washing grimy socks and making grilled peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with a big smile on my face that told the world I thought everything was grand. No, I wasn't ready to settle down to twenty-four hour K. P. duty, not yet anyway.

Glancing again at David I saw he still had that idiotic grin on his face; he winked at me and smiling I batted a wicked flirtatious wink right back to him that meant I had a lot of unmarried life to live and my answer to his proposal was still "No."



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The Brambler

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR, VIRGINIA

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First Prize Story

SHARON VAN CLEVE

THE LAND OF THE FREE

NO ONE SPOKE. An occasional baby's cry or a cough or the dull shuffling of feet were the only sounds to tear at the veil of silence which shrouded the room. It was quiet, not with the hushed serenity of contentment or satisfaction but with the oppressive barrier of silence which is raised to conceal the inner anxieties and fears of men. The roughly hewn benches lining the walls were crowded with silent people, each enveloped in himself, so close yet so oblivious to the presence of his neighbor. Not even the families talked among themselves for the few children sat meekly, seeming to sense the importance of the moment.

Hans Reidenschber watched those ahead of him being called into the office at the end of the room by a stout, severe-looking English woman. She stumbled on the names as she progressed down her list. Guvusy, Jarowski, Lubomudrov, Oliotti, Papatheofilou, she called. Soon it would be his turn. Three times in the past two years he had been in that office. He knew it was just a tiny, barren room but what happened during his brief interview there meant life itself.

Hans glanced around the room, his gaze falling upon the many strange faces—dark and fair, Caucasian and Oriental, peasant and bourgeois. Old faces, he thought. It was true, for even the faces of the young in years were lined with the strain of inconceivable sorrow and weariness. There were few young, however. The vigorous and strong had long since left and all that remained now were the small children, the weak and the aged.

"Reidenschber," the woman called. Hans rose stiffly to his feet and walked towards the office. He had been a tall man once but now his back was bowed and his left foot dragged heavily as he walked, constant reminders of his concentration camp years. He hesitated at the door until the man seated behind the desk motioned for him to enter and sit down. "Reidenschber?" the man asked as he shuffled through a stack of green folders, pulled one out and opened it before him. Hans nodded.

"I see here that you speak English."

"Yes," Hans said, "I have studied much since two years." There had been little else to do. For two years he had been here, unable to work and without the tools for his beloved painting. He looked down at his thin, pale hands. They had been fine hands, almost beautiful, and now it had been seven years since they had held a brush.

"Concentration camp four years, displaced persons camp in Salonika for a year and then you were transferred here. Is that correct?"

Yes! Yes! Hans wanted to scream. You know it. It is written on your paper and yet you must ask me again. Seven years. Not just figures on a paper but seven horrible years of a life no better than death. He didn't say it, though, and forced himself to smile, to reply politely, "Yes sir."

"I know you have been here a long while but I hope you realize, Mr. Reidenschber, that it is difficult to find an opening for a man in your position. We have been trying but the quotas we are given, he paused, shrugged, half turned to look out the window, must first be filled by the young farmers and skilled laborers. If only you had a trade, perhaps we could. . . ."

"I'm sorry," Hans interrupted, "but the painting is my life and I am now too many years to make a new life."

"I see," the man said, still looking away from him, looking out the window. "Well, I wish I could help you but we just have a few places left this time and I'm afraid most countries are unwilling to take the risk of an artist who may be unable to support himself." He turned then and did look; he closed the folder and stood up saying, "I truly am sorry Mr. Reidenschber, but possibly in a few months there will be some sort of opening."

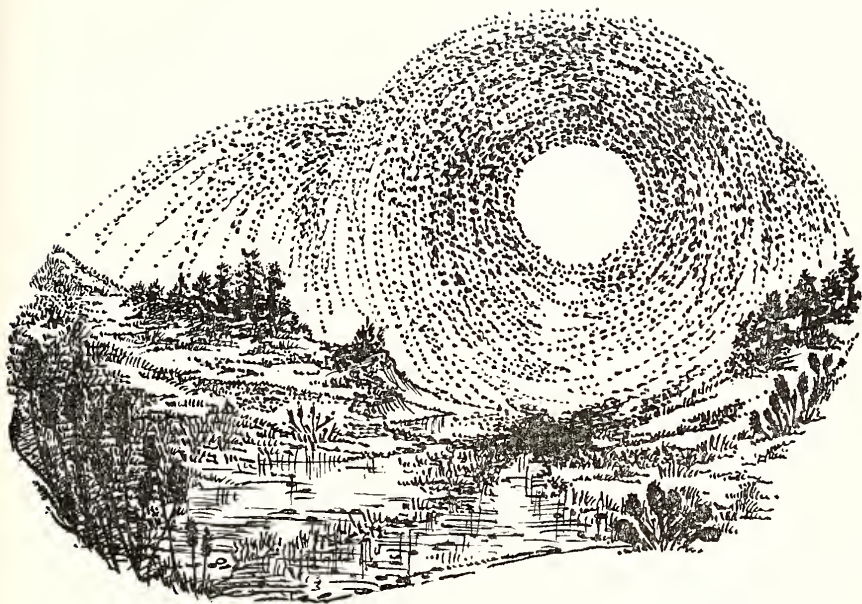
Hans stood too, seeing that the interview was over. He felt nothing. Pain and sorrow were his constant companions and over the trials of the past years their thrusts had been dulled, leaving only an aching emptiness. Home, he thought bitterly, family, country have been torn from me. Now, when he had only one remaining hope, it too was wrenched from his grasp. Yes, he would be called in again but he knew that it would be the same—no place yet. It would always be the same now and all he could do was wait until death came to relieve him of an already lifeless existence.

Second Prize Poem

GLUTTONY

Like a great, bloated, bilious bag,
Distorted, distended, drum-tight dispose-all:
My stomach.
I can't move.
"What's for supper?"

MARY FITZHUGH



First Prize Poem

THE LAST SOUND OF SUMMER

I stand and listen
To the last sound of summer —
A sound of crickets' death
A sound of waiting.
Summer lies dying on her side,
Breathing slowly, and saying
That love shall do the same.
She tells in truth and quiet voice
That winter's but a lonely night to live,
Then light of moon and lamp together
Spills veil — shadows down, tumbling, falling
Deep into the empty dell. And
I hear it disappear, for
This is the last sound of summer. . .

JUDY DUNN

Second Prize Story

LAURIE DENMAN

THE KIDNAPPER

THE RAIN had stopped, all but a few dismal splatterings from a vaporous sky. Muddy water was still running into puddles in the hollows of the sidewalk when the girl came along, trudging with her conscientious little step, and absently surveying the dripping trees along the street's edge. She was going to be late for school, but she was not in her customary state of panic over this situation — she was too absorbed in her dreaming. She thought she was alone on the street, but another tardy child was walking a few blocks behind her, and up ahead, a dark haired man stood on the curb, facing away from her.

As the girl caught sight of this figure, something in his appearance arrested her mind from its absurd imaginings. A distinct foreboding of danger came into her thoughts. Mother had warned her of KIDNAPPERS only once or twice, as a precautionary measure, but the idea had become rooted in the child's imagination that these sinister individuals were the symbols of all evil.

Reluctantly, she approached the place where the man stood. As she expected, he turned round and faced her, a short, young, unshaven KIDNAPPER, wearing a worn blue coat, and a tired expression.

He came toward the now un-moving little girl. "Is Mary Ann Smith in your class?" he asked, as if this were a perfectly normal query from a strange man to a little girl on the street.

"No, she isn't," came back the polite response. The child was half-relieved, half-disappointed at the turn this kidnapping was taking. As she began to move away again, the stranger said hoarsely, "Would you like to go downtown to get an ice cream cone?"

Amazed that the expected question had actually been asked, the girl quickly responded, "No, I'll be late for school." She was delighted at her own fright, and took a certain pleasure in being able to disappoint the evil aims of this criminal.

"I'll drive you to school, then." The stranger's voice took on an insistent tone, and now the child was truly frightened. She felt the rigidity of fear spreading across her body. Suddenly, she didn't have control over this situation. "No, no, I have to go!", she finally gasped, and ran with small pounding steps down the wet slate sidewalk. Even in her terror, a detached piece of her mind was ashamed at showing such cowardice to the inferior person.

He didn't pursue her. There was another little girl of ten coming along the street now. She had the same long, yellow hair and straight bangs. Not all little girls have such a deadly fear of KIDNAPPERS. He came face to face with the newcomer. "Do you know Mary Ann Smith?", he asked, pleasantly.

Paranoia

Jan,

Jan,

I am narcissistic and masochistic
and altruistic
and hedonistic
and realistic
and idealistic

and agnostic.

No, Jan

You are not altruistic

Why?

ADRIANNE ASH

SABRA BROCK

WHITE COLUMNS

BUTTONING my trench coat, I hurry down the slick stone steps. The rain and wind fight my advance—not that it's the cold, unfriendly weather of Northern winter storms. No, these are gentle, friendly drops, tapping on my umbrella as if they want into my thoughts. They caution me to take the way of beauty, past the white columns and the pretty, friendly girls, who prance back and forth like the thoroughbreds they love to ride. I'm one of them now, even though I sit a little too stiff on my horse and my boots still hurt.

Yet a bond, never completely secured, not quite broken, holds and lures me down the narrow asphalt path to the unsegregated part of the campus. Here, even the flowers and weeds share equally the all too-crowded greenhouse. Two young Negro porters stand by the garbage cans. Don't smile. Try to look right through them; they aren't like you.

A heavy green door opens, and the black and the white kitchen help walk out. . . . Don't step aside; they'll wait until you go by. You're one of the pretty, prancing girls in trench coats. . . . But I hear a friendly voice, "Hi, Shirley, how are you getting home this weekend?" Turning to join the familiar trench-coated figures, I see only the rain and white starched uniforms

I walk on quicker and see the white columns again.

The Static and the Mobile

LANI STRUGGLED to push her way through the hot damp air, not caring whether her hair hung in her face or down the back of her neck in stringy lumps. It was too hot to care about anything, she decided, stumbling every few paces in a hidden furrow in the stubblefield. Out in the middle of a cornfield was no place to be in the middle of August, and the myriad of little flying bugs in the crevices in the corn jungle next to the stubble row made seeking shade unattractive. Only a half mile to go before she would reach the cave-like coolness of the barn and her task. She looked down, knowing that when she reached the end of the field rushing past beneath her feet, there would be a gravel road, and she would turn left and follow it across the blacktopped main driveway to the boss' house and into the barnyard.

Half blindly she made the right turns and crunched into the barnyard. The boss' hunting dogs tried vainly to claw their way out of the kennel runs and investigate the intruder, shattering the still air with their insane yapping. One of the farm hands poked his whiskered, wisened face out of a doorway, his keen blue eyes looking out from under a broad brimmed straw hat and years of wrinkles.

"'Lo," he said matter of factly, with a toothless smile.

"Hi," said Lani, in mock despair. "It's too hot for human existence." The little old man looked at her puzzlingly. "I said, it's just plain **TOO HOT** today."

"Yeshm, it most shertinly ish," he said, slowly and authoritatively craning his neck toward the sky. "Well, guessh we don't have to wait too long fer a shower. Shee thet cloud?" Lani nodded her head silently. It was a big, boiling cloud, poised as if it were a huge animal jumping the mountains to the west, sedate only in that its flat black base hovered and sent its gray streams to the earth. Lani knew what that mean. Rain.

"Guess I better get my schooling done with before *that* little baby arrives. How long do you think it'll take?"

"'Bout two hoursh ish my guessh." Nodding again, Lani turned sharply and clomped down the cement to the yawning doorway. Climbing up on the edge of the end stall, she surveyed the assembly of chesnut and bay colts below her to see which had no traces of a saddle mark from the morning.

Finding one, she sighed with resignation. The shaggy chestnut coat belonged to a very much mistreated and nervous old mare, whose years of subservience to a series of Drugstore Cowboys had sharpened to the utmost her sensitiveness to the least sign of a signal that could be interpreted as a signal to gallop. Anxious to please, her obedience to the restraining of the reins was only and insane galloping in place. I wish I were always inspired enough to be patient with her, Lani thought nobly. She's the only one left over from this morning and the only one I haven't worked with before.

Lani's fingers moved over the equipment quickly and nimbly, and soon the mare was ready. A dark patch of wet hair on the upper ridge of her massive shoulder proclaimed the tremors within the outwardly still body of the horse.

Tugging on the reins, Lani led the mare out onto the cinder pathway, and immediately swung up. The mare squatted under her and prepared for the scuttle she knew from experience was expected of her. Lani was expecting the spring and dash, and tightened the reins, checking the mare's flight after one or two strides. Then came the inevitable struggle, the little bucks, and the galloping in place. Lani relaxed, and let the mare cover the ground one leap at a time. Far ahead, she could see the boss sitting on the fence. He was a powerful looking and acting man up close, and it delighted her to see him looking like a little black ant. Sometimes he came out to watch her school, sitting like a vulture on the fence of the riding ring. He never seemed to miss a time when she had an especially difficult case to school. She was glad of his presence only because she wouldn't have to dismount to open the gate, he would do it for her.

Once through the gate, she concentrated on the animal beneath her. Instead of the pulling that the mare had become so used to, Lani tried letting her hands follow the plunging of the mare's head and neck. That she would eventually relax was inevitable, but after two turns around the ring, the boss summoned her over to him. The horse's ears twitched back and forth as the two of them listened to his gruff voice.

"Couldn't you have that horse back in shape in about three weeks?" Should I tell him yes and bluff my way through or tell him the truth and get fired right now, Lani wondered. And taking a deep breath—

"Well, sir, if you mean *really* back in shape, it would be more like three years. . . ." The mare plunged and whirled incessantly.

"I still think it could be done in less time."

"Very well, sir."

"Now, go to work, and see what you can accomplish."

"Yes, sir." Lani and the mare continued to plunge around the dusty oval, the patch of dark wet hair on the horse's shoulder having become solid, with rivers of white lather trickling from it in a spiral around the stocky stomping legs. Whenever the animal threatened to get out of control, Lani would stop her, and the mare would nervously edge her quarters away from the fence, and look longingly out over the open fields and hills in the distance.

Almost imperceptibly, the muscles in the horse's neck began to relax, and with them, Lani's hands. The bucks and plunges slowly, became less frequent, and the tortured, heaving flanks billowed in and out less violently. The mare had discovered something new — hands that gave when she needed to balance with her neck, and she delighted in it.

And at last, she walked. Oh, the joy of it! Lani wanted to spread-eagle her arms and clasp them around the sweaty neck, but she knew that it would be the undoing signal that would touch off the frenzy.

"Now, that looks good." The sudden interruption made the mare crouch, but a soft hand on her neck checked the explosion. If only he would keep his

grouchy old mouth shut! Lani nodded disagreeably. "Why don't you try a trot now?". Because it would undo everything, you fool, thought Lani.

"Well, sir, I don't think she's ready for it now at ALL."

"I think you can do it. For the amount you get paid, you ought to be able to!"

"Yes, sir. TROT." The mare raised her head in alarm and did nothing more. "She isn't voice-trained, I see," muttered Lani, half to herself. Now she would have to use her legs. Gently . . . squееееееее . . . lightly— and the plunging began again.

And so for the next hour not more than two of the mare's hooves at a time touched the ground. When she finally stood still, the balmy wind swirled around her head, and she snorted and was off again. Lani looked up, and the boss had disappeared. The sky was dark, and frothed and rippled grays and blacks above her head. A blotch of water splatted on Lani's cheek. And another. And two more. The gate was standing open, and they bounced through it. The horse knew the way to the barn instinctively, and fought to be free, to get the musty, raftered shelter and out of the storm.

Lani didn't care that the horse was plunging sideways, its hind legs cutting a swath through the oats planted beside the narrow trail. Her thoughts were elsewhere.

The old farm hand poked his head out of the doorway once more at the sound of the hoofbeats and the dogs.

"I'll walk her fer you."

"Thanks."

"G'bye." And Lani turned on her heel, and walked toward the corn which stood so tall against the battering rain.

SOUTHERN FROST

The fields were frosted this morning—
Delicately glazed by winter's paintbrush.

Each blade of grass,
Iced, brittle—

Encased in a web of silver—
Cracking beneath my feet,
Leaving a trail

across

the

hillside.

But there are other tracks beside mine;
I must not linger.

Yet, it is so still—

Frozen in suspended animation—
hushed,

waiting,

silent.

NINA SLEDGE



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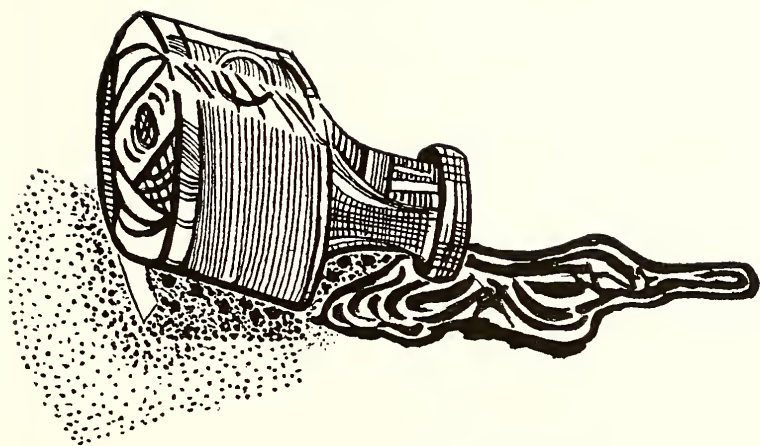
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Polymnic Bound

SWAMP of unsung poems:
Mists and murk;
Purple and indigo;
Tall mazes of grass
Waving, bowing, dancing
In a rhythm apart from Sunday poets' awful yearning;
Will-of'-the-wisps that never misled Homer;
Ireful agony of helpless, exquisite confusion
Where Ariane is lost and
Only Arachnid unwinds a thread
One awkward stumble breaks.

SUSAN RUSMISEL

THE RIVER

SHAHNAZ ANWAR ALI

THE RIVER FLOWED silently and peacefully through the flat country. It could not always be seen; tall grasses sprang on either side, and sometimes transgressed into the water. In a few places it was almost choked by the vicious growth of the water-plant; the green lotus-like buds covered its surface from bank to bank, giving it a landlike appearance of firmness. Wherever this possession of it ended, the river patiently emerged, blackened by the thick roots of the waterplant.

At other places, the river widened out and seemed not to be moving at all. It was like a vast mirror reflecting the passing glories of the clouds. In the evening it caught the fiery glow of the sunset, shading its face with the nuances of colors which dissolved into each other with subtle transparency.

Farther on, the river shared the busy life of a village. Naked children played at its edge. Chattering housewives, standing kneedeep in the soapy water, beat their washing on stone slabs. Here a Muslim performed his ablutions; there a new-born babe was immersed in the water. On the village outskirts, a herd of buffaloes wallowed in the muddy water. A shapeless float bore away the ashes of some departed soul; the desolate wails of relatives acted as requiem.

Truly it was a witness of life's joys and sorrows. And in it, the happiness and grief of men was reflected.

Frequently, little tributaries dribbled off from it to sustain the paddy-fields round about. The river reached out its arms into the country on both sides, providing nourishment in the winter months. In summer, there was less urgency; the paddy-fields looked to the not unheeding heavens. The sky poured its blessing with prodigal abundance.

By it, the river's face was changed. It rushed on its course, carrying with it the avenging water-plant, flattening the growing grasses. Its swollen body burst over the frightened countryside. Its wild rush took no note of land or life. Whatever it met; it transported with it to the greatness of the ocean. Aziza cast a last look at the unyielding darkness outside. With a sigh, she lifted the bag of flour from the ground, and, measuring a meager cup, of it into the brass basin, began to knead it. This part of it was so tiresome; if only the flour wouldn't stick to the hands, it would be easier. Her forehead wore a crease of anxiety, which deepened into a frown each time she glanced at the old clock on the shelf. What could possibly be the matter with Khan? The rain might have delayed him, but hardly enough to make him nearly five hours late, and it took less than two hours to walk home from the place where he worked.

She sprinkled a few more drops of water into the basin; with the added water, the flour became less sticky and she gathered it up into a ball, wiping the sides of the basin with it to ensure that no grain of it would be wasted. She set to and pummelled the mixture energetically for some minutes, feeling a little of

her perturbation ebbing away in the exercise. At last, the dough was at the correct mediacy. She laid it aside, and brought a cover to put over it.

Nine o'clock. She was growing restless. She listened for the sound of unlatching; it did not come. There was only the rain, pattering down with rhythmic monotony on the thatched roof; streaming off it to drain into the muddy puddles all around.

Through the sheets of rain, the oppressive night seemed to invade the house; she felt its deliberate hand closing her in. Her heart is contracting with fear within her. With a sudden movement she slapped her palms to her burning ears, in a futile attempt to shut out the sound of the rain. She stood up; she must not lose her balance, he will probably be home soon; after all, he might be waiting for the rain to stop. She walked into the small room where the children lay asleep. By the dim light of the oil-lamp which shone from a niche in the wall, she saw that all three were sleeping deeply. Her face softened involuntarily, and she forgot her anxiety for a moment. Little Munno had tossed the thin quilt off him; she bent down to tuck him in it, she lingered in a caress on the baby cheek. She closed the half-open window, for the room was now sufficiently cool.

Her heart gave a loud thump, then seemed to stop. Had she imagined it, or was that a knock on the front door? Her hesitating feet moved toward it. And then she heard it again, only this time it was a banging. It was not Khan, he would not have knocked, but they had come to tell her about him. Cold fear gripped her. Yes, he was not well—oh God!—let him be well, the father of my children, my Khan! Oh God! Her fists were clenched so tight that the nails dug into her palms. Her feet were cold in the leather sandals; the back of her heels scraped along the mud-floor of the hut. Then she was at the door, pulling frantically at the chain, tearing to throw it open.

The jamdar entered, dripping from head to toe; his umbrella had not stood against the torrential downpour outside, and he flung it to one side.

"What is it? Why have you come? Is he well? Khan, is he well?" Aziza could not restrain herself.

"Calm down, sister, calm down. Have faith in God, he is well; one minute and—" he tried to wring the superfluous water from his shirt as best he could. The loin-cloth clung to his bony hips like a leech.

"Now sit down, and I will tell you. They sent word to me a little while ago from across the river and I came as soon as I could to tell you. You know Baboo—he works in the same place as Khan does—well he came to tell me to give you this message: the bridge across the river is broken; you know how flimsy it was—we always said it would break with the next heavy rainfall! The river is in flood and Baboo got across with a lot of difficulty, at a place further up the river—at a place where it was narrower. Now wait, hear it all . . . don't be so impatient . . . Khan is still on the other side and he will try to get across where he can . . ." He laid a fatherly hand on her shoulder, and in a lowered voice, continued: ". . . Now, sister, have faith in God—" a pause, then, as if he were forcing himself, "the other side has been badly affected by the flood—all this rain is doing no good—two huts have been swept away already. I know Khan will be careful, that's probably why he is late, he is waiting for the rain to stop and seeking a place where the river is less turbulent; your Khan is a strong man,

may God keep him safe, he'll get here sooner or later. May God forgive our sins, and have mercy on us!"

Aziza sat there with no will to move a finger—Khan—on the other side and the river in flood! The last time there had been a flood nine persons from their village had been killed in it. The bodies had floated about in the swollen river, and one corpse had been deposited nearly three miles downstream. She could still hear the wailing grief of the widows, and the uncomprehending faces of the orphaned children rose up vividly before her. She heard the jamdar saying, "Now sister, don't think of it, don't let your mind dwell on it—it is in the hands of God." It frightened him that she had not yet shed a tear; in his sixty years, he had seen so many women lose their husbands and loved ones—true, she had not lost Khan yet, but—but they had cried till the hiccups came upon them. "Now, come sister, make an old man a nice hot cup of tea before he faces the hellish storm again . . . come, up." And he supported her up by the arm.

She gave him a miserable smile. How hard it was to focus the haze in her mind: but she must. After all there were the children, and what if Munno or Rani awakened and saw her like that! She tried to gather her wandering wits, making a desperate effort not to break down—but she must not cry—no, don't cry! She went and fetched some logs from the back verandah, and quickly stepped back in again—the rain frightened her; it was like the physical menace of a rearing snake.

It was a hard job to get the fire started with the wood a bit damp. She bunched up some old paper into a ball and placed it under the logs in the brick stove, then lit it with a match. A whiff of sulphurous smell arose to her nostrils. "Must get more paper, much much more paper," she thought blankly, and feeling weak in the stomach went to the room where Khan and she lived, and reached behind the rickety wooden chest for some old newspaper. There was only a little—it might do for the moment. His coat—his only coat—lay on their bed like a dark shadow. It had been left lying there since this morning; was it only this morning that she had sewn on that button? It seemed more like a year. It made her sick to see it. She turned hastily to go out. In the uncertain light of the flickering oil-lamp, her eye fell upon his cap which hung on a nail on the wall. "Oh, Khan—you are all around me . . . and in me," she thought, "I cannot stop thinking of you—take care, my husband, take care . . ."

"Aziza! Come sister, don't brood in your room; I am waiting for the tea—" She rejoined the jamdar; with dazed mechanical movements, she made the preparations for his tea.

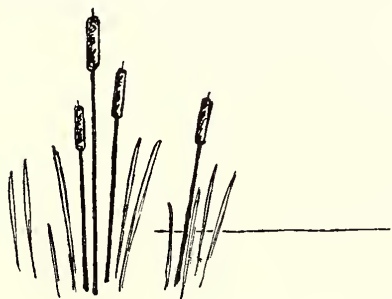
The jamdar had wrapped himself in a quilt he had taken from the shelf near the window and was now sitting hunched up on a low stool in one corner. Only his wise, brilliant eyes betrayed that he was awake, and alert. He had known Aziza and Khan since their marriage, and there was much visiting between his wife and daughters and Aziza. May God keep him safe . . . Khan was a great source of pride to the village. He began to talk about his new grandson in an effort to distract Aziza, but stopped after a while when he saw her gazing fixedly into nothingness. The tea was made and drunk and the jamdar put on his still-wet shirt again. With many assurances and offers of help, the old man took his leave, crouching beneath the useless black umbrella. Aziza saw him disappear through the wall of rain. She shut the door, bolted and latched it.

Her mind was a vacuum where chill numbness prevented lethargic uncertainty from entering. Going into the children's room, she lay down by the little one. She slipped her forefinger into one of his chubby little fists. She must try not to think of Khan—anything but that; it would make her mad to dwell upon his danger. She tried to think of all she must do the next day. If it did not rain, the roof must be looked to and reinforced with straw. And Jan could not wade through all that water to school; but she must try to make him study a bit at home. He was well-built for his twelve years; so much like his father. From where she lay in Munno's bed, which was far too small for her and the wooden edges pressed into her back—she could see Jan's profile darkly outlined in the semi-gloom of the room.

She found herself not sleepy in the least. Instead her mind was active. She resisted the flood of memories no longer. Recollections of her girlhood—in this same village-flooded back to her. She saw herself once more helping her father sow in the paddy crop; felt again the ankle-deep water, and how the soil gave way under the insistence of her digging fingers; then pushing the moist earth back in place after the young shoot had been planted. Floating down the river in a boat, they had visited the big town near the ocean, far away. They had some relatives living there; her aunt had given her the prettiest earrings she had ever seen, and in a moment she had had them in her ears! She had shared the bed with her cousin. Khan's family lived in her village, too, and he had been a friend of her brother. Nearly ten years younger than him, he had always inspired her with awe.

What tremulous shock she had felt one day when her father had gravely informed her that she was to marry Khan! She had not dared to answer her father, or to trust her voice, merely lowering her eyes modestly. Later, it was her dear mother who had argued her nervous qualms away. The great day had come, and with the marriage had begun her introduction to life. And every day in the last thirteen years; she had learned something about it—and about Khan. "What a fine time my Khan has given me," she thought, "and three children have been born of our love. I possess each moment of my life with him—no one can deprive me of it, no person can take away my children." Thus she joyed in what she had. With a prayer to God, she slipped into a deep and dreamless sleep.

The monsoon had spent itself, and the rains were over, the flood had subsided. Once again, the mute river resumed its passage. Once more, its surface of innocent quiet harbored the persistent water-plant and reflected the mysteries of night and day.



Value

COME on, I'll race you to the sun."
"You know we can't. It's too far out.
If Maw knew what we was about
And Paw, with field work to be done . . ."

"But Jamie, come, I want to see . . ."
"You want to see Paw whip us good?
You want to hear Maw scream you should
Stop dreaming so? Act more like me—

"I can plow like Paw, and on my own
Can track a coon, and even dare . . ."
"How small we all must look form there!
I guess I'll have to race alone."

KITTY CARTER

Evil Is Subtle

EVIL is subtle in the world.
But on its inward way,
Wild with ravage, all Hell's unfurled
And gathers in its prey.

In the boiling poison chalice
With blushing jewels winking,
The dregs are men benumbed by malice
In sodden stupor blinking.

But hope and even peace
Attend the faithful soul,
Who fears that life may be but lease—
Conditional parole.

GRAY BAIRD

Almost The Dead And The Dying

BARBARA SINGLETON BEURY

ELLEN shut the car door and paused, looking at the yellow brick house before her. It was a lovely Sunday, as Sundays go in a small town: the newspaper consisting of mainly the Society page and comics, church, a piece-meat lunch and then afternoon, the time for visiting grandmothers and old maid aunts. She had both so here she was.

The house just sat there reflecting the permanence of the two people inside. The small yard, containing one stunted well-centered cherry tree was blocked off by a neat cement curb, these two potted geranium plants that went inside in the winter and reigned on the stone pilasters up the steps in summer were in place, as was the porch furniture which was arranged in a line along the wall next to the house waiting for conversationless sitting.

"You never change," Ellen said politely to the geraniums on either side of her as she walked onto the wide, red-tiled porch. She knocked, then tried the knob of the storm door. It was locked. "How silly," she thought, "right in the middle of town with neighbors inches away and here . . ." She rang the bell and almost instantaneously her Aunt Myra was at the door as if she had been skulking in the shadows of the hall all along, watching, yet waiting for the formality of the doorbell to announce the visitor.

Ellen smiled warmly, she liked her Aunt Myra if for no other reason than because she had gotten her Master's at Columbia.

"Well, hello," she said kissing her Aunt's arid right cheek, "how have you been?"

She knew how she'd been without asking—"Fine"—because when one stops living everything must be "fine" and colorless.

"Oh, oh fine, but come inside."

Ellen walked into the dim hallway thinking how lovely her Aunt Myra had been. She remembered the stories about the blond hair which her Aunt had worn coiled high on her head making her face and body appear more fashionably slender. Of the delicate pastel shades she insisted on wearing, the kind that children love to touch because they look so much like candy and ice cream. Ellen had always heard her mother say that Myra was the most intellectual one in the family, always reading and wanting to talk about profound things. Now here she was with her grey-white hair (still worn coiled high on her head) dressed in the conventional school teacher's garb: nylon jewel-neck blouse, a muted checked suit skirt and wedged heels. As for her discussions on profound topics? Her most penetrating subject now days seemed to be the psychological adjustments of her grade-school children. But what could anyone expect? Ellen thought, when the woman had been trapped in a long narrow hallway between two small rooms; one labeled "home," the other "school."

They were seated now on the edge of two straight chairs near the arch into

the hall as though they were strangers and didn't want to be caught in the living room if something unpleasant happened.

"It's good to see you Elbo."

Ellen felt a pang of guilt hearing the pet name derived from some unknown childhood incident that was always used in her maternal family circle.

"I know I've been awful about not coming on vacations and all but now that I'm finished with college . . . But where's grandmother?"

"She's upstairs getting ready to take her nap. Why don't you go say hello while I make some lemonade."

"All right."

Ellen started to run up the steps two at a time as she had always done but at the first landing she stopped remembering she was twenty-two now . . . there was something about the house that made her ageless. She walked down the short hallway and paused outside her grandmother's bedroom, peeking around the corner to see if she were asleep. At first she saw no one but then noticed the high-backed rocker moving quickly back and forth, then pausing, then beginning again. She thought of the many evenings she had spent sitting in that same chair on Mimi's lap, leaning against her grandmother's "pillows" watching all the neighbors go to bed. It was a game to Ellen for they would each make a guess whose lights would go out first, or if Elbo was particularly restless who would pull their bedroom blinds last. As she got older she understood that for Mimi it wasn't a game but a perverted sort of entertainment, a curious, sad way of keeping up with the lives of the people she knew only by their faces. Ellen shook her head then spoke:

"Grandmother?"

There was no immediate response except the movement of the flaccid white arm which her Grandmother slowly extended as she wrapped her small hand around the arm of the chair. Ellen walked further into the room yet not far enough so that her voice would suddenly shatter the silence and frighten the old woman.

"Hello Grandmother."

This time the rocker stopped and the frizzled grey head jerked then turned to face her.

"It's me Mimi, Elbo."

Ellen thought it best to say her name because if she didn't she knew her grandmother would go perplexedly through about five names of five of her other eighteen grandchildren usually stopping, sure she was right with either Elizabeth, Ellen's younger sister or Lucy her female cousin nearest in age who had also gone to a Woman's College in Virginia. As the matriach raised herself from the chair Ellen walked across the room to meet her.

"Well, don't you look well," Ellen began.

Her grandmother squeezed her against her corpulent body (it was strange how the mass of flesh had all settled on her front side while from the back of her head to the tops of her heels was almost a flat surface) and said:

"How have you been, Honey,," she giggled and rubbed one of those small hands in a circular motion over her bulbous nose, a nose that had been beautifully formed in childhood but had been constantly rubbed in this circular fashion until it had been reduced to a nonentity.

"You've gotten taller since I last saw you haven't you Elbo?"

Ellen knew the answer to this question, it was one her Grandmother always asked first as if she too knew the answer but waited to gain confidence in herself before going on. Knowing she hadn't grown an inch since she was fifteen years old she replied:

"Perhaps just a little, an inch or two."

"I thought so."

She seemed satisfied with Ellen's answer and went on.

"Now what vacation are you home for? It can't be Christmas so it must be . . . Easter?"

"No, I'm home for good now Mimi, at least until Fall. Remember you got an invitation to my graduation just this month and sent me that lovely silk blouse and great-grandmother's diamond butterfly pin."

Her grandmother looked rather confused but replied how silly it was of her to forget. She too seemed aware how often she was oblivious of almost everything and yet other times had a memory of family events surpassed by none. The doctor said these addled spells were due to a severe heart-attack she had had shortly after her husband died of cancer five years before and the several slight ones since which caused the blood to not circulate as quickly through her brain at certain times as it did at others. Ellen had heard all the stories about how this poor muddled woman would get up in the middle of the night to move the furniture around in her room or how Myra would hear her opening and shutting drawers and going to see what was happening would get a chilly reply from her mother that she was looking for *something* and would Myra please go to bed and leave her alone. Ellen knew how salty Mimi could be at times or as the doctor had told the family after her last heart attack: "She'd been dead a long time ago if she didn't have so much of the devil in her."

"Well Mimi," Ellen said, "Aunt Myra told me you were just getting ready to take your nap so I'll let you rest."

As if the brief conversation had left her worn out the old woman moved towards her high four poster bed on her stiffly swollen ankles and feet. Her only reply was: "You'll come back and visit real soon, won't you Elbo?"

"Of course Mimi, as I said before I'll be here all summer for certain, and that means I'll be able to visit you more often."

Ellen backed out of the room and shut the door softly relieved at hearing the squeaking of the springs that indicated her grandmother was actually planning to rest. Before going back downstairs she peeked into her own mother's old room where Ellen slept as a child when she came to visit. The same cherry bed, chest, dresser and the one ladder-back chair. She could still feel the crispness of those sheets and remembered how afraid she was to sleep there alone because in the corner of the room was the door that led to the attic. At night just before turning out the light Mimi would always place the ladder-back chair in front of the attic door as if she too were afraid of the stuffed birds and things that were up there.

Back downstairs Aunt Myra had placed a pitcher of lemonade and some cookies on the coffee table which was already burdened with china candy dishes and a solitary rose vase, the kind of gifts children always give beside the usual

handkerchiefs to school-teachers at Christmas. Her aunt was seated on the love seat in front of the window gazing blankly out. Ellen wanted to say to her, "Look, I know you're lonely, no one in the family cares much, they say you preferred to remain at home and should have expected you'd be left alone taking care of them both, then her. But what if it were one of the other six, saddled with a semi-senile old woman who becomes more hostile everyday because she knows in a sense you're her keeper. One who will die and probably not even leave you this house to live in for the rest of your life. They should thank God you were afraid to get married and have children or else it would be their money going out every month for a nurse and housekeeper or to put her in a private home. Must human beings always be so heartless that all they can say to someone suffering and perhaps inwardly regretting their one dooming mistake "I could have told you so?"

Myra looked around suddenly, and seeing the expression on Ellen's face knew she understood, understood that in this room there were two women; one just beginning and one knowing she had finished. The older woman turned towards the window again as if to deny the unspoken finality, after a moment she spoke:

"Well, come sit down and tell me all that's new with you Elbo."

Ellen sat down and picked up a cookie and one of the tumblers filled with crushed ice and lemonade. To the sprig of mint on the top it was the same thing that had been served at her every summer afternoon she visited since she was ten and knew it would be the same until there was no one left in this house to serve it.

"Nothing much. I do want to thank you for the lovely silk blouse and the butterfly pin. Even though the card read "Mimi and Aunt Myra" I'm sure it was all your doing."

"I won't deny you're right, and I'm glad you like it, I thought the color would be particularly becoming on you. It really gets harder every year to keep up with all the grandchildren, and now with all the great-grandchildren . . . we're such a prolific family."

Ellen smiled, "Yes, I guess Elizabeth, Aunt Lillian's four, Lucy and myself are the only grandchildren left to reproduce."

"Yes, thank heavens some of them are still too young and you and Lucy have the consideration to wait a while and let me catch up with the others."

"Speaking of children, how are things at school?"

Myra was now the principal of the largest county grade school and since the rest of her life was being put to good use there, it seemed "school" was about the only other topic open for discussion.

"Fine. We did have a small fire the other day. One of the teachers left on the hot-plate in the lounge and set the curtains on fire. We go all the children out in short order, even before the fire trucks came and . . ."

Ellen knew this story would lead into others and still others and it made her want a cigarette desperately. But she knew she couldn't smoke here, even her mother who was in her late forties had never smoked in front of her mother or Myra. It was just another of those unspoken conventions. She began nibbling on another cookie and looked around the room just listening to shreds of the

conversation. Ellen knew this was safe because no response was needed, just an ear. She noticed they had had that strange squat chair recovered in an off-beat chartreuse green but everything else was the same: the rocker with the red cushion tied to on of the rungs of its straight back, the secretary that held knick-knacks (presents from school children of years past) and a few books, but was never allowed to perform its real duty as a desk having been shoved in a corner behind a big wing chair; the title fireplace with those same hideous scorpion andirons; and the television set all the children had given Mimi for Christmas about three years ago. Every level surface was covered with pictures of the children, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren with more recent snapshots stuck in the corners of the frames. Only one of them meant anything much to her and that was the one of her grandfather Darien which hung over the corner drum table. The expression on his face was perfect: the smile was his, the look in his eyes the same as the wise, kind old English gentleman who had told her at seven years of age: "Put your skirt down Suzie, don't you know I can see the dimple in your knee;" and at nine years had taken her to her first "big church" service. Ellen remembered how proud she had been to sit beside this distinguished looking gentleman dressed in his dapper red neck tie and blue serge suit in his special pew. She had sat as tall and alert for as long as possible so he'd be glad he'd brought her, then finally when she could pretend no longer she tried to rest her head on the back of the bench and look as if she were studying the decorations on the ceiling. He glanced at her and instead of frowning, smiled and nudging her placed a stick of horehound candy in her hand.

Myra was still going on, as Ellen guessed she hadn't noticed whether her niece were listening or not.

"... and of course when Mrs. Green asked if I thought she should do anything to punish Jimmy for hiding in the cloak room instead of filing out with the other children I said she shouldn't punish him but just try to explain as I had already done how dangerous a thing it was to do. Then I discussed it with Lucy, she being a psychology major and having done all that welfare work for the state, and she said I was wrong and that Jimmy should have been punished because . . ."

Ellen had her opening to change this monologue into a more reciprocal conversation and she was tired of just listening.

"Do you see much of Lucy nowadays?"

Aunt Myra stopped, almost shocked at the discovery Ellen was not only hearing her talk but listening:

"Hmmm, Oh, Lucy, yes indeed, you know when the Republicans came in last year almost everyone in the Department of Health and Welfare got fired, because of course they were all Democrats. Well, when that Miss Rye who'd been there practically since they created the department was asked to resign Lucy knew she'd never know when they'd decide to give her the axe, so while she could still get a decent job she resigned and took the newly created post as *my* psychological consultant."

"That must be quite nice for you, but why does she work anyway? Didn't her father's brother, the one that was a bachelor, leave her a big wad of money when he died?"

"Yes, but I guess she just wanted something to do to fill up her days, I mean

to get out of the house and all. Since her father died she and her mother are even at worse odds than they've ever been. Now they sometimes go for days without speaking, and poor Lucy just goes to work then comes home to sit alone in her bedroom."

"What brought all this on?" Ellen asked.

"I guess it all stems back to after that John Summers broke his engagement with Lucy. She just refused to date anyone at all for a long time, finally when she did take up with some fellow he was one her mother didn't approve of at all. I mean some strange young man who came here to work at one of the chemical plants, with no way to trace his background and family. Helen kept harping at Lucy to give him up, that he had probably heard about her money and just wanted to get his hands on it. Of course I tried to make Lucy see Helen's side, because I knew exactly how she felt about it, we didn't want Lucy to be hurt again. Then one day Lucy just came and said she couldn't take it anymore "we'd won" and that she wasn't going to see the man again. Needless to say we were all so relieved, Helen and I just planned to forget the whole incident. But Lucy has never been the same towards her mother since . . ."

"Don't you think it might be a good idea for Lucy to take a trip or something, I mean with all that money she could have a divine time . . . Europe . . . the Carribean, or Ha . . ."

"Oh she'll get over it eventually, anyway this cruise idea sounds rather extravagant to me. The whole family knows Ed didn't leave Helen too well fixed and when she gets older Lucy's going to *have* to help support her own mother."

"Heavens, if I had all that money and was as pretty and as intelligent as Lucy I wouldn't sit around being bored or worry if I were being extravagant with my money or not!"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Well, if I were her I'd at least make a last try at starting out somewhere else, on my own, and have some fun, live a little, gee, all that lovely money going to waste . . ."

"Oh Lucy did do something nice for herself, something rather extravagant for her thirtieth birthday. About a week before as she was cleaning out some old boxes in her closet, it was one of the nights she and Helen weren't speaking, she found the darling little pair of white kid gloves and the ostrich fan her father had given her for her first tea dance. Anyway she took them down and had them both mounted on some robin's egg blue velvet, which matches her bedroom walls, and then framed. Wasn't that just a divine idea? Hmmm Elbo, wasn't that just original and cute??"

Ellen didn't answer. She and Myra were both quiet for a minute then her Aunt, noticing Ellen had finished her lemonade spoke:

"Do have some more lemonade Ellen, Grandmother wouldn't like it if we let all that in the pitcher go to waste."

"Oh, oh no thank you Aunt Myra I'm going to have to go in just a second."

Ellen sat her glass down on the table carefully beside the delicate china rose vase, doing so she noticed the green sprig of mint had become encased in the finely crushed ice.

September 1960

HE VAIN wake streams out icy proud
And leaves no trace,
The spray back blown to surge again
Into the riding rhythm
Of this strange sister of the moon,
Timeless tyrant with her peace blue pools and glacier green;
Trespassing over the wise wild sea
Weightless we walk over the fishes and faces of men
Yet wonder not.

SUSAN BELL

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